Oh author of my being!— far more dear
To me than light, than nourishment, or rest.

F. Lewis del. Published Nov.r 24 1779.

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EVELINA,

OR,

THE HISTORY

OF

A YOUNG LADY'S

ENTRANCE

INTO THE

WORLD.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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M.DCC.LXXXIII.

EVELINA;

OR,

THE HISTORY

OF

A YOUNG LADY'S

ENTRANCE

INTO THE

WORLD.

To ——— ———.

OH author of my being!—far more dear
To me than light, than nouriſhment, or reſt,
Hygieia's bleſſings, Rapture's burning tear,
Or the life blood that mantles in my breaſt!

If in my heart the love of Virtue glows,
'Twas planted there by an unerring rule;
From thy example the pure flame aroſe,
Thy life, my precept—thy good works, my ſchool.

Could my weak pow'rs thy num'rous virtues trace,
By filial love each fear ſhould be repreſs'd;
The bluſh of Incapacity I'd chace,
And ſtand, recorder of thy worth, confeſs'd:

But ſince my niggard ſtars that gift refuſe,
Concealment is the only boon I claim;
Obſcure be ſtill the unſucceſsful Muſe,
Who cannot raiſe, but would not ſink, thy fame.

Oh!

Oh! of my life at once the source and joy!
If e'er thy eyes these feeble lines survey,
Let not their folly their intent destroy;
Accept the tribute—but forget the lay.

TO THE

AUTHORS

OF THE

MONTHLY and CRITICAL REVIEWS.

GENTLEMEN,

THE liberty which I take in addreſſing to You the trifling production of a few idle hours, will, doubtleſs, move your wonder, and, probably, your contempt. I will not, however, with the futility of apologies, intrude upon your time, but briefly acknowledge the motives of my temerity:

rity: leſt, by a premature exerciſe of that patience which I hope will befriend me, I ſhould leſſen its benevolence, and be acceſſary to my own condemnation.

Without name, without recommendation, and unknown alike to ſucceſs and diſgrace, to whom can I ſo properly apply for patronage, as to thoſe who publicly profeſs themſelves Inſpectors of all literary performances?

The extenſive plan of your critical obſervations,—which, not confined to works of utility or ingenuity, is equally open to thoſe of frivolous amuſement,—and yet worſe than frivolous dullneſs,—encourages me to ſeek for your protection, ſince,—perhaps for my ſins!—it entitles me to your annotations. To preſent, therefore, this offering, however inſignificant, would ill become the univerſality of your undertaking, though not to deſpiſe it may, alas! be out of your power.

The language of adulation, and the incenſe of flattery, though the natural inheritance, and conſtant reſource, from

time

time immemorial, of the Dedicator, to me offer nothing but the wistful regret that I dare not invoke their aid. Sinister views would be imputed to all I could say; since, thus situated, to extol your judgment, would seem the effect of art, and to celebrate your impartiality, be attributed to suspecting it.

As Magistrates of the press, and Censors for the public,—to which you are bound by the sacred ties of integrity to exert the most spirited impartiality, and to which your suffrages should carry the marks of pure, dauntless, irrefragable truth—to appeal for your MERCY, were to solicit your dishonour; and therefore,—though 'tis sweeter than frankincense,—more grateful to the senses than all the odorous perfumes of Arabia,—and though

It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath,———

I court it not! to your justice alone I am entitled, and by that I must abide. Your engagements are not to the supplicating

plicating author, but to the candid public, which will not fail to crave

The penalty and forfeit of your bond.

No hackneyed writer, inured to abuſe, and callous to criticiſm, here braves your ſeverity;—neither does a half-ſtarv'd garretteer,

Oblig'd by hunger—and requeſt of friends,—

implore your lenity: your examination will be alike unbiaſſed by partiality and prejudice;—no refractory murmuring will follow your cenſure, no private intereſt be gratified by your praiſe.

Let not the anxious ſolicitude with which I recommend myſelf to your notice, expoſe me to your deriſion. Remember, Gentlemen, you were all young writers once, and the moſt experienced veteran of your corps, may, by recollecting his firſt publication, renovate his firſt terrors, and learn to allow for mine. For, though Courage is one of the nobleſt virtues of this nether ſphere, and, though ſcarcely more requiſite in the field of battle, to guard

the

the fighting hero from diſgrace, than in the private commerce of the world, to ward off that littleneſs of ſoul which leads, by ſteps imperceptible, to all the baſe train of the inferior paſſions, and by which the too timid mind is betrayed into a ſervility derogatory to the dignity of human nature; yet is it a virtue of no neceſſity in a ſituation ſuch as mine; a ſituation which removes, even from cowardice itſelf, the ſting of ignominy;—for ſurely that courage may eaſily be diſpenſed with, which would rather excite diſguſt than admiration! Indeed, it is the peculiar privilege of an author, to rob terror of contempt, and puſillanimity of reproach.

Here let me reſt,—and ſnatch myſelf, while I yet am able, from the faſcination of EGOTISM,—a monſter who has more votaries than ever did homage to the moſt popular deity of antiquity; and whoſe ſingular quality is, that while he excites a blind and involuntary adoration in almoſt every individual, his influence is univerſally diſallowed, his power univerſally contemned, and his

worſhip, even by his followers, never mentioned but with abhorrence.

In addreſſing you jointly, I mean but to mark the generous ſentiments by which liberal criticiſm, to the utter annihilation of envy, jealouſy, and all ſelfiſh views, ought to be diſtinguiſhed.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt obedient

Humble ſervant,

*** ****

PRE-

PREFACE.

IN the republic of letters, there is no member of such inferior rank, or who is so much disdained by his brethren of the quill, as the humble Novelist: nor is his fate less hard in the world at large, since, among the whole class of writers, perhaps not one can be named of which the votaries are more numerous but less respectable.

Yet, while in the annals of those few of our predecessors, to whom this species of writing is indebted for being saved from contempt, and rescued from depravity, we can trace such names as Rousseau, Johnson, Marivaux, Fielding, Ri-*

* However superior the capacities in which these great writers deserve to be considered, they must pardon me that, for the dignity of my subject, I here rank the authors of Rasselas and Eloise as Novelists.

chardſon, and Smollet, no man need bluſh at ſtarting from the ſame poſt, though many, nay, moſt men, may ſigh at finding themſelves diſtanced.

The following letters are preſented to the public—for ſuch, by novel writers, novel readers will be called,—with a very ſingular mixture of timidity and confidence, reſulting from the peculiar ſituation of the editor; who, though trembling for their ſucceſs from a conſciouſneſs of their imperfections, yet fears not being involved in their diſgrace, while happily wrapped up in a mantle of impenetrable obſcurity.

To draw characters from nature, though not from life, and to mark the manners of the times, is the attempted plan of the following letters. For this purpoſe, a young female, educated in the moſt ſecluded retirement, makes, at the age of ſeventeen, her firſt appearance upon the great and buſy ſtage of life; with a virtuous mind, a cultivated underſtanding, and a feeling heart, her ignorance of the forms, and inexperience in the manners, of the world, occaſion all the little incidents which theſe volumes record, and which form the natural progreſſion of the life of a young woman of obſcure birth, but conſpicuous beauty, for the firſt ſix months after her Entrance into the world.

Perhaps were it poſſible to effect the total extirpation of novels, our young ladies in gene-

ral,

ral, and boarding-ſchool damſels in particular, might profit from their annihilation: but ſince the diſtemper they have ſpread ſeems incurable, ſince their contagion bids defiance to the medicine of advice or reprehenſion, and ſince they are found to baffle all the mental art of phyſic, ſave what is preſcribed by the ſlow regimen of Time, and bitter diet of Experience, ſurely all attempts to contribute to the number of thoſe which may be read, if not with advantage, at leaſt without injury, ought rather to be encouraged than contemned.

Let me, therefore, prepare for diſappointment thoſe who, in the peruſal of theſe ſheets, entertain the gentle expectation of being tranſported to the fantaſtic regions of Romance, where Fiction is coloured by all the gay tints of luxurious Imagination, where Reaſon is an outcaſt, and where the ſublimity of the Marvellous, *rejects all aid from ſober Probability. The heroine of theſe memoirs, young, artleſs, and inexperienced, is*

No faultleſs Monſter, that the world ne'er ſaw,

but the offspring of Nature, and of Nature in her ſimpleſt attire.

In all the Arts, the value of copies can only be proportioned to the ſcarceneſs of originals: among ſculptors and painters, a fine ſtatue, or a beautiful picture, of ſome great maſter, may deſervedly employ the imitative talents of younger and inferior artiſts, that their appropriation to

one

one ſpot, may not wholly prevent the more general expanſion of their excellence; but, among authors, the reverſe is the caſe, ſince the nobleſt productions of literature, are almoſt equally attainable with the meaneſt. In books, therefore, imitation cannot be ſhunned too ſedulouſly; for the very perfection of a model which is frequently ſeen, ſerves but more forcibly to mark the inferiority of a copy.

To avoid what is common, without adopting what is unnatural, muſt limit the ambition of the vulgar herd of authors: however zealous, therefore, my veneration of the great writers I have mentioned, however I may feel myſelf enlightened by the knowledge of Johnſon, charmed with the eloquence of Rouſſeau, ſoftened by the pathetic powers of Richardſon, and exhilarated by the wit of Fielding, and humour of Smollet; I yet preſume not to attempt purſuing the ſame ground which they have tracked; whence, though they may have cleared the weeds, they have alſo culled the flowers, and though they have rendered the path plain, they have left it barren.

The candour of my readers, I have not the impertinence to doubt, and to their indulgence, I am ſenſible I have no claim: I have, therefore, only to entreat, that my own words may not pronounce my condemnation, and that what I have here ventured to ſay in regard to imitation, may be underſtood, as it is meant, in a general

neral ſenſe, and not be imputed to an opinion of my own originality, which I have not the vanity, the folly, or the blindneſs, to entertain.

Whatever may be the fate of theſe letters, the editor is ſatisfied they will meet with juſtice; and commits them to the preſs, though hopeleſs of fame, yet not regardleſs of cenſure.

EVELINA.

EVELINA.

LETTER I.

Lady Howard to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove, Kent.

CAN any thing, my good Sir, be more painful to a friendly mind, than a neceſſity of communicating diſagreeable intelligence? Indeed, it is ſometimes difficult to determine, whether the relator or the receiver of evil tidings is moſt to be pitied.

I have juſt had a letter from Madame Duval; ſhe is totally at a loſs in what manner to behave; ſhe ſeems deſirous to repair the wrongs ſhe has done, yet wiſhes the world to believe her blameleſs. She

would fain caſt upon another the odium of thoſe misfortunes for which ſhe alone is anſwerable. Her letter is violent, ſometimes abuſive, and that of *you!—you*, to whom ſhe is under obligations which are greater even than her faults, but to whoſe advice ſhe wickedly imputes all the ſufferings of her much-injured daughter, the late Lady Belmont. The chief purport of her writing I will acquaint you with; the letter itſelf is not worthy your notice.

She tells me that ſhe has, for many years paſt, been in continual expectation of making a journey to England, which prevented her writing for information concerning this melancholy ſubject, by giving her hopes of making perſonal enquiries; but family occurrences have ſtill detained her in France, which country ſhe now ſees no proſpect of quitting. She has, therefore, lately uſed her utmoſt endeavours to obtain a faithful account of whatever related to her *ill-adviſed* daughter; the reſult of which giving her *ſome reaſon* to apprehend that, upon her death-bed, ſhe bequeathed an infant orphan to the world, ſhe moſt graciouſly ſays, that if *you*, with whom *ſhe underſtands* the child is placed, will procure authentic proofs of its relationſhip to her, you may ſend it to Paris, where ſhe will properly provide for it.

This

This woman is, undoubtedly, at length, ſelf-convicted of her moſt unnatural behaviour: it is evident, from her writing, that ſhe is ſtill as vulgar and illiterate as when her firſt huſband, Mr. Evelyn, had the weakneſs to marry her; nor does ſhe at all apologiſe for addreſſing herſelf to me, though I was only once in her company.

Her letter has excited in my daughter Mirvan, a ſtrong deſire to be informed of the motives which induced Madame Duval to abandon the unfortunate Lady Belmont, at a time when a mother's protection was peculiarly neceſſary for her peace and her reputation. Notwithſtanding I was perſonally acquainted with all the parties concerned in that affair, the ſubject always appeared of too delicate a nature to be ſpoken of with the principals; I cannot, therefore, ſatisfy Mrs. Mirvan otherwiſe than by applying to you.

By ſaying that you *may* ſend the child, Madam Duval aims at *conferring*, where ſhe moſt *owes* obligation. I pretend not to give you advice; you, to whoſe generous protection this helpleſs orphan is indebted for every thing, are the beſt and only judge of what ſhe ought to do; but I am much concerned at the trouble and uneaſineſs which this unworthy woman may occaſion you.

My daughter and my grandchild join with me in desiring to be most kindly remembered to the amiable girl; and they bid me remind you, that the annual visit to Howard Grove, which we were formerly promised, has been discontinued for more than four years.

I am, dear Sir,
with great regard,
Your most obedient friend and servant,
M. HOWARD.

LETTER II.

Mr. Villars to Lady Howard.

Berry Hill, Dorsetshire.

YOUR Ladyship did but too well foresee the perplexity and uneasiness of which Madame Duval's letter has been productive. However, I ought rather to be thankful that I have so many years remained unmolested, than repine at my present embarrassment; since it proves, at least, that this wretched woman is at length awakened to remorse.

In regard to my answer, I must humbly request your Ladyship to write to this effect: "That I would not, upon any account, intentionally offend Madame Duval, but

but that I have weighty, nay unanſwerable reaſons for detaining her grand-daughter at preſent in England; the principal of which is, that it was the earneſt deſire of one to whoſe Will ſhe owes implicit duty. Madame Duval may be aſſured that ſhe meets with the utmoſt attention and tenderneſs; that her education, however ſhort of my wiſhes, almoſt exceeds my abilities; and I flatter myſelf, when the time arrives that ſhe ſhall pay her duty to her grandmother, Madame Duval will find no reaſon to be diſſatisfied with what has been done for her."

Your Ladyſhip will not, I am ſure, be ſurpriſed at this anſwer. Madame Duval is by no means a proper companion or guardian for a young woman: ſhe is at once uneducated and unprincipled; ungentle in her temper, and unamiable in her manners. I have long known that ſhe has perſuaded herſelf to harbour an averſion for me—Unhappy woman! I can only regard her as an object of pity!

I dare not heſitate at a requeſt from Mrs. Mirvan, yet, in complying with it, I ſhall, for her own ſake, be as conciſe as I poſſibly can; ſince the cruel tranſactions which preceded the birth of my ward, can afford no entertainment to a mind ſo humane as her's.

Your Ladyſhip may probably have heard, that I had the honour to accompany Mr. Evelyn, the grandfather of my young charge, when upon his travels, in the capacity of a tutor. His unhappy marriage, immediately upon his return to England, with Madame Duval, then a waiting-girl at a tavern, contrary to the advice and entreaties of all his friends, among whom I was myſelf the moſt urgent, induced him to abandon his native land, and fix his abode in France. Thither he was followed by ſhame and repentance; feelings which his heart was not framed to ſupport: for, notwithſtanding he had been too weak to reſiſt the allurements of beauty, which nature, though a niggard to her of every other boon, had with a laviſh hand beſtowed on his wife; yet he was a young man of excellent character, and, till thus unaccountably infatuated, of unblemiſhed conduct. He ſurvived this ill-judged marriage but two years. Upon his death-bed, with an unſteady hand, he wrote me the following note:

"My friend! forget your reſentment, in favour of your humanity;—a father, trembling for the welfare of his child, bequeaths her to your care.—O Villars! hear! pity! and relieve me!"

Had

Had my circumſtances permitted me, I ſhould have anſwered theſe words by an immediate journey to Paris; but I was obliged to act by the agency of a friend, who was upon the ſpot, and preſent at the opening of the will.

Mr. Evelyn left to me a legacy of a thouſand pounds, and the ſole guardianſhip of his daughter's perſon till her eighteenth year, conjuring me, in the moſt affecting terms, to take the charge of her education till ſhe was able to act with propriety for herſelf; but in regard to fortune, he left her wholly dependent on her mother, to whoſe tenderneſs he earneſtly recommended her.

Thus, though he would not, to a woman low-bred and illiberal as Mrs. Evelyn, truſt the conduct and morals of his daughter, he nevertheleſs thought proper to ſecure to her the reſpect and duty which, from her own child, were certainly her due; but, unhappily, it never occurred to him that the mother, on her part, could fail in affection or juſtice.

Miſs Evelyn, Madam, from the ſecond to the eighteenth year of her life, was brought up under my care, and, except when at ſchool, under my roof. I need not ſpeak to your Ladyſhip of the virtues of that excellent young creature. She

loved me as her father; nor was Mrs. Villars leſs valued by her; while to me ſhe became ſo dear, that her loſs was little leſs afflicting than that which I have ſince ſuſtained of Mrs. Villars herſelf.

At that period of her life we parted; her mother, then married to Monſieur Duval, ſent for her to Paris. How often have I ſince regretted that I did not accompany her thither! protected and ſupported by me, the miſery and diſgrace which awaited her, might, perhaps, have been avoided. But, to be brief—Madame Duval, at the inſtigation of her huſband, earneſtly, or rather tyrannically, endeavoured to effect a union between Miſs Evelyn and one of his nephews. And, when ſhe found her power inadequate to her attempt, enraged at her non-compliance, ſhe treated her with the groſſeſt unkindneſs, and threatened her with poverty and ruin.

Miſs Evelyn, to whom wrath and violence had hitherto been ſtrangers, ſoon grew weary of ſuch uſage; and raſhly, and without a witneſs, conſented to a private marriage with Sir John Belmont, a very profligate young man, who had but too ſucceſsfully found means to inſinuate himſelf into her favour. He promiſed to conduct her to England—he did.——O, Madam, you know the reſt!—Diſappointed of the

fortune he expected, by the inexorable rancour of the Duvals, he infamouſly burnt the certificate of their marriage, and denied that they had ever been united!

She flew to me for protection. With what mixed tranſports of joy and anguiſh did I again ſee her! By my advice ſhe endeavoured to procure proofs of her marriage;—but in vain: her credulity had been no match for his art.

Every body believed her innocent, from the guiltleſs tenor of her unſpotted youth, and from the known libertiniſm of her barbarous betrayer. Yet her ſufferings were too acute for her tender frame, and the ſame moment that gave birth to her infant, put an end at once to the ſorrows and the life of its mother.

The rage of Madame Duval at her elopement, abated not while this injured victim of cruelty yet drew breath. She probably intended, in time, to have pardoned her, but time was not allowed. When ſhe was informed of her death, I have been told, that the agonies of grief and remorſe, with which ſhe was ſeized, occaſioned her a ſevere fit of illneſs. But, from the time of her recovery to the date of her letter to your Ladyſhip, I had never heard that ſhe manifeſted any deſire to be made acquainted with the circumſtances

which attended the death of Lady Belmont, and the birth of her helpleſs child.

That child, Madam, ſhall never, while life is lent me, know the loſs ſhe has ſuſtained. I have cheriſhed, ſuccoured, and ſupported her, from her earlieſt infancy to her ſixteenth year; and ſo amply has ſhe repaid my care and affection, that my fondeſt wiſh is now circumſcribed by the deſire of beſtowing her on one who may be ſenſible of her worth, and then ſinking to eternal reſt in her arms.

Thus it has happened that the education of the father, daughter, and grand-daughter, has devolved on me. What infinite miſery have the two firſt cauſed me! Should the fate of the dear ſurvivor be equally adverſe, how wretched will be the end of my cares—the end of my days!

Even had Madame Duval merited the charge ſhe claims, I fear my fortitude would have been unequal to ſuch a parting; but, being ſuch as ſhe is, not only my affection, but my humanity recoils, at the barbarous idea of deſerting the ſacred truſt repoſed in me. Indeed, I could but ill ſupport her former yearly viſits to the reſpectable manſion at Howard Grove; pardon me, dear Madam, and do not think me inſenſible of the honour which your Ladyſhip's condeſcenſion confers upon us both; but ſo deep

is

is the impreſſion which the misfortunes of her mother have made on my heart, that ſhe does not, even for a moment, quit my ſight, without exciting apprehenſions and terrors which almoſt overpower me. Such, Madam, is my tenderneſs, and ſuch my weakneſs!—But ſhe is the only tie I have upon earth, and I truſt to your Ladyſhip's goodneſs not to judge of my feelings with ſeverity.

I beg leave to preſent my humble reſpects to Mrs. and Miſs Mirvan; and have the honour to be,

Madam,
Your Ladyſhip's moſt obedient
and moſt humble ſervant,
ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER III.

[Written ſome months after the laſt.]

Lady Howard to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove, March 8.

Dear and Rev. Sir,

YOUR laſt letter gave me infinite pleaſure: after ſo long and tedious an ill-

neſs, how grateful to yourſelf and to your friends muſt be your returning health! You have the hearty wiſhes of every individual of this place for its continuance and increaſe.

Will you not think I take advantage of your acknowledged recovery, if I once more venture to mention your pupil and Howard Grove together? Yet you muſt remember the patience with which we ſubmitted to your deſire of not parting with her during the bad ſtate of your health, though it was with much reluctance we forbore to ſolicit her company. My grand-daughter, in particular, has ſcarce been able to repreſs her eagerneſs to again meet the friend of her infancy; and for my own part, it is very ſtrongly my wiſh to manifeſt the regard I had for the unfortunate Lady Belmont, by proving ſerviceable to her child; which ſeems to me the beſt reſpect that can be paid to her memory. Permit me, therefore, to lay before you a plan which Mrs. Mirvan and I have formed, in conſequence of your reſtoration to health.

I would not frighten you;—but do you think you could bear to part with your young companion for two or three months? Mrs. Mirvan propoſes to ſpend the enſuing ſpring in London, whither, for the firſt time, my grandchild will accompany her:

Now,

Now, my good friend, it is very earneſtly their wiſh to enlarge and enliven their party by the addition of your amiable ward, who would ſhare, equally with her own daughter, the care and attention of Mrs. Mirvan. Do not ſtart at this propoſal; it is time that ſhe ſhould ſee ſomething of the world. When young people are too rigidly ſequeſtered from it, their lively and romantic imaginations paint it to them as a paradiſe of which they have been beguiled; but when they are ſhown it properly, and in due time, they ſee it ſuch as it really is, equally ſhared by pain and pleaſure, hope and diſappointment.

You have nothing to apprehend from her meeting with Sir John Belmont, as that abandoned man is now abroad, and not expected home this year.

Well, my good Sir, what ſay you to our ſcheme? I hope it will meet with your approbation; but if it ſhould not, be aſſured I can never object to any deciſion of one who is ſo much reſpected and eſteemed as Mr. Villars, by

His moſt faithful humble ſervant,

M. Howard.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Mr. Villars to Lady Howard.

Berry Hill, March 12.

I AM grieved, Madam, to appear obſtinate, and I bluſh to incur the imputation of ſelfiſhneſs. In detaining my young charge thus long with myſelf in the country, I conſulted not ſolely my own inclination. Deſtined, in all probability, to poſſeſs a very moderate fortune, I wiſhed to contract her views to ſomething within it. The mind is but too naturally prone to pleaſure, but too eaſily yielded to diſſipation: it has been my ſtudy to guard her againſt their deluſions, by preparing her to expect,—and to deſpiſe them. But the time draws on for experience and obſervation to take place of inſtruction: if I have, in ſome meaſure, rendered her capable of uſing one with diſcretion, and making the other with improvement, I ſhall rejoice myſelf with the aſſurance of having largely contributed to her welfare. She is now of an age that happineſs is eager to attend,—let her then enjoy it! I commit her to the protection of your Ladyſhip, and only hope ſhe may be found worthy half the goodneſs I am ſatisfied ſhe will meet with at your hoſpitable manſion.

Thus far, Madam, I chearfully ſubmit to your deſire. In confiding my ward to the care of Lady Howard, I can feel no uneaſineſs from her abſence, but what will ariſe from the loſs of her company, ſince I ſhall be as well convinced of her ſafety as if ſhe were under my own roof;—but, can your Ladyſhip be ſerious in propoſing to introduce her to the gaieties of a London life? Permit me to aſk, for what end, or what purpoſe? A youthful mind is ſeldom totally free from ambition; to curb that, is the firſt ſtep to contentment, ſince to diminiſh expectation, is to increaſe enjoyment. I apprehend nothing more than too much raiſing her hopes and her views, which the natural vivacity of her diſpoſition would render but too eaſy to effect. The town-acquaintance of Mrs. Mirvan are all in the circle of high life; this artleſs young creature, with too much beauty to eſcape notice, has too much ſenſibility to be indifferent to it; but ſhe has too little wealth to be ſought with propriety by men of the faſhionable world.

Conſider, Madam, the peculiar cruelty of her ſituation; only child of a wealthy Baronet, whoſe perſon ſhe has never ſeen, whoſe character ſhe has reaſon to abhor, and whoſe name ſhe is forbidden to claim; entitled as ſhe is to lawfully inherit his fortune and

eſtate,

eſtate, is there any probability that he will *properly* own her? And while he continues to perſevere in diſavowing his marriage with Miſs Evelyn, ſhe ſhall never, at the expence of her mother's honour, receive a part of her right, as the donation of his bounty.

And as to Mr. Evelyn's eſtate, I have no doubt but that Madame Duval and her relations will diſpoſe of it among themſelves.

It ſeems, therefore, as if this deſerted child, though legally heireſs of two large fortunes, muſt owe all her rational expectations to adoption and friendſhip. Yet her income will be ſuch as may make her happy, if ſhe is diſpoſed to be ſo in private life; though it will by no means allow her to enjoy the luxury of a London fine lady.

Let Miſs Mirvan, then, Madam, ſhine in all the ſplendor of high life; but ſuffer my child ſtill to enjoy the pleaſures of humble retirement, with a mind to which greater views are unknown.

I hope this reaſoning will be honoured with your approbation; and I have yet another motive which has ſome weight with me; I would not willingly give offence to any human being, and ſurely Madame Duval might accuſe me of injuſtice, if, while I refuſe to let her grand-daughter wait upon her, I conſent that ſhe ſhould join a party of pleaſure to London.

In

In ſending her to Howard Grove, not one of theſe ſcruples ariſe; and therefore Mrs. Clinton, a moſt worthy woman, formerly her nurſe, and now my houſekeeper, ſhall attend her thither next week.

Though I have always called her by the name of Anville, and reported in this neighbourhood that her father, my intimate friend, left her to my guardianſhip, yet I have thought it neceſſary ſhe ſhould herſelf be acquainted with the melancholy circumſtances attending her birth; for, though I am very deſirous of guarding her from curioſity and impertinence, by concealing her name, family, and ſtory, yet I would not leave it in the power of chance, to ſhock her gentle nature with a tale of ſo much ſorrow.

You muſt not, Madam, expect too much from my pupil. She is quite a little ruſtic, and knows nothing of the world; and though her education has been the beſt I could beſtow in this retired place, to which Dorcheſter, the neareſt town, is ſeven miles diſtant, yet I ſhall not be ſurpriſed if you ſhould diſcover in her a thouſand deficiencies of which I have never dreamt. She muſt be very much altered ſince ſhe was laſt at Howard Grove,—but I will ſay nothing to her; I leave her to your Lady-

ſhip's

ſhip's own obſervations, of which I beg a faithful relation; and am,

Dear Madam, with great reſpect,
Your obedient and moſt humble ſervant,
ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER V.

Mr. Villars to Lady Howard.

March 18.

Dear Madam,

THIS letter will be delivered to you by my child,—the child of my adoption,—my affection! Unbleſt with one natural friend, ſhe merits a thouſand. I ſend her to you, innocent as an angel, and artleſs as purity itſelf: and I ſend you with her the heart of your friend, the only hope he has on earth, the ſubject of his tendereſt thoughts, and the object of his lateſt cares. She is one, Madam, for whom alone I have lately wiſhed to live; and ſhe is one whom to ſerve I would with tranſport die! Reſtore her but to me all innocence as you receive her, and the fondeſt hope of my heart will be amply gratified.

A. VILLARS.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Lady Howard to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove.

Dear and Rev. Sir,

THE ſolemn manner in which you have committed your child to my care, has in ſome meaſure dampt the pleaſure which I receive from the truſt, as it makes me fear that you ſuffer from your compliance, in which caſe I ſhall very ſincerely blame myſelf for the earneſtneſs with which I have requeſted this favour; but remember, my good Sir, ſhe is within a few days ſummons, and be aſſured I will not detain her a moment longer than you wiſh.

You deſire my opinion of her.

She is a little angel! I cannot wonder that you ſought to monopolize her. Neither ought you, at finding it impoſſible.

Her face and perſon anſwer my moſt refined ideas of complete beauty: and this, though a ſubject of praiſe leſs important to you, or to me, than any other, is yet ſo ſtriking, it is not poſſible to paſs it unnoticed. Had I not known from whom ſhe received her education, I ſhould, at firſt ſight of ſo perfect a face, have been in pain

for

for her underſtanding; ſince it has been long and juſtly remarked, that folly has ever ſought alliance with beauty.

She has the ſame gentleneſs in her manners, the ſame natural grace in her motions, that I formerly ſo much admired in her mother. Her character ſeems truly ingenuous and ſimple; and, at the ſame time that nature has bleſſed her with an excellent underſtanding, and great quickneſs of parts, ſhe has a certain air of inexperience and innocency that is extremely intereſting.

You have no reaſon to regret the retirement in which ſhe has lived; ſince that politeneſs which is acquired by an acquaintance with high life, is in her ſo well ſupplied by a natural deſire of obliging, joined to a deportment infinitely engaging.

I obſerve with great ſatisfaction a growing affection between this amiable girl and my grand-daughter, whoſe heart is as free from ſelfiſhneſs or conceit, as that of her young friend is from all guile. Their regard may be mutually uſeful, ſince much is to be expected from emulation, where nothing is to be feared from envy. I would have them love each other as ſiſters, and reciprocally ſupply the place of that tender and happy relationſhip, to which neither of them have a natural claim.

Be

Be ſatisfied, my good Sir, that your child ſhall meet with the ſame attention as our own. We all join in moſt hearty wiſhes for your health and happineſs, and in returning our ſincere thanks for the favour you have conferred on us.

I am, Dear Sir,
Your moſt faithful ſervant,
M. HOWARD.

LETTER VII.

Lady Howard to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove, March 26.

BE not alarmed, my worthy friend, at my ſo ſpeedily troubling you again; I ſeldom uſe the ceremony of waiting for anſwers, or writing with any regularity, and I have at preſent immediate occaſion for begging your patience.

Mrs. Miryan has juſt received a letter from her long-abſent huſband, containing the welcome news of his hoping to reach London by the beginning of next week. My daughter and the Captain have been ſeparated almoſt ſeven years, and it would therefore be needleſs to ſay what joy, ſur-

priſe, and conſequently confuſion, his, at preſent, unexpected return has cauſed at Howard Grove. Mrs. Mirvan, you cannot doubt, will go inſtantly to town to meet him; her daughter is under a thouſand obligations to attend her; I grieve that her mother cannot.

And now, my good Sir, I almoſt bluſh to proceed;—but, tell me, may I aſk—will you permit—that your child may accompany them? Do not think us unreaſonable, but conſider the many inducements which conſpire to make London the happieſt place at preſent ſhe can be in. The joyful occaſion of the journey; the gaiety of the whole party; oppoſed to the dull life ſhe muſt lead if left here, with a ſolitary old woman for her ſole companion, while ſhe ſo well knows the chearfulneſs and felicity enjoyed by the reſt of the family,—are circumſtances that ſeem to merit your conſideration. Mrs. Mirvan deſires me to aſſure you, that one week is all ſhe aſks, as ſhe is certain that the Captain, who hates London, will be eager to reviſit Howard Grove: and Maria is ſo very earneſt in wiſhing to have the company of her friend, that, if you are inexorable, ſhe will be deprived of half the pleaſure ſhe otherwiſe hopes to receive.

However, I will not, my good Sir, deceive you into an opinion that they intend

to

to live in a retired manner, as that cannot be fairly expected. But you have no reaſon to be uneaſy concerning Madame Duval; ſhe has not any correſpondent in England, and obtains no intelligence but by common report. She muſt be a ſtranger to the name your child bears; and, even ſhould ſhe hear of this excurſion, ſo ſhort a time as a week, or leſs, ſpent in town upon ſo particular an occaſion, though previous to their meeting, cannot be conſtrued into diſreſpect to herſelf.

Mrs. Mirvan deſires me to aſſure you, that if you will oblige her, her *two* children ſhall equally ſhare her time and her attention. She has ſent a commiſſion to a friend in town to take a houſe for her, and while ſhe waits for an anſwer concerning it, I ſhall for one from you to our petition. However, your child is writing herſelf, and that, I doubt not, will more avail than all we can poſſibly urge.

My daughter deſires her beſt compliments to you, *if*, ſhe ſays, you will grant her requeſt, but *not elſe*.

Adieu, my dear Sir,—we all hope every thing from your goodneſs.

M. Howard.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Evelina to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove, March 26.

THIS houſe ſeems to be the houſe of joy; every face wears a ſmile, and a laugh is at every body's ſervice. It is quite amuſing to walk about, and ſee the general confuſion; a room leading to the garden is fitting up for Captain Mirvan's ſtudy. Lady Howard does not ſit a moment in a place; Miſs Mirvan is making caps; every body ſo buſy!—ſuch flying from room to room!—ſo many orders given, and retracted, and given again!—nothing but hurry and perturbation.

Well but, my dear Sir, I am deſired to make a requeſt to you. I hope you will not think me an incroacher; Lady Howard inſiſts upon my writing!—yet I hardly know how to go on; a petition implies a want,—and have you left me one? No, indeed.

I am half aſhamed of myſelf for beginning this letter. But theſe dear ladies are ſo preſſing—I cannot, for my life, reſiſt wiſhing for the pleaſures they offer me,—provided you do not diſapprove them.

They

They are to make a very ſhort ſtay in town. The Captain will meet them in a day or two. Mrs. Mirvan and her ſweet daughter both go;—what a happy party! Yet I am not *very* eager to accompany them: at leaſt, I ſhall be contented to remain where I am, if you deſire that I ſhould.

Aſſured, my deareſt Sir, of your goodneſs, your bounty, and your indulgent kindneſs, ought I to form a wiſh that has not your ſanction? Decide for me, therefore, without the leaſt apprehenſion that I ſhall be uneaſy, or diſcontented. While I am yet in ſuſpenſe, perhaps I may *hope*, but I am moſt certain, that when you have once determined, I ſhall not repine.

They tell me that London is now in full ſplendour. Two Play-houſes are open,—the Opera-houſe,—Ranelagh,—and the Pantheon.—You ſee I have learned all their names. However, pray don't ſuppoſe that I make any point of going, for I ſhall hardly ſigh to ſee them depart without me; though I ſhall probably never meet with ſuch another opportunity. And, indeed, their domeſtic happineſs will be ſo great,—it is natural to wiſh to partake of it.

I believe I am bewitched! I made a reſolution when I began, that I would not be urgent; but my pen—or rather my thoughts,

will not ſuffer me to keep it—for I acknowledge, I muſt acknowledge, I cannot help wiſhing for your permiſſion.

I almoſt repent already that I have made this confeſſion; pray forget that you have read it, if this journey is diſpleaſing to you. But I will not write any longer; for the more I think of this affair, the leſs indifferent to it I find myſelf.

Adieu, my moſt honoured, moſt reverenced, moſt beloved father! for by what other name can I call you? I have no happineſs or ſorrow, no hope or fear, but what your kindneſs beſtows, or your diſpleaſure may cauſe. You will not, I am ſure, ſend a refuſal, without reaſons unanſwerable, and therefore I ſhall chearfully acquieſce. Yet I hope—I hope you will be able to permit me to go! I am,

With the utmoſt affection,
gratitude, and duty,
Your
EVELINA ——.

I cannot to *you* ſign *Anville*, and what other name may I claim?

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Mr. Villars to Evelina.

Bery-Hill, March 28.

TO refift the urgency of entreaty, is a power which I have not yet acquired: I aim not at an authority which deprives you of liberty, yet I would fain guide myſelf by a prudence which ſhould ſave me the pangs of repentance. Your impatience to fly to a place which your imagination has painted to you in colours ſo attractive, ſurpriſes me not; I have only to hope that the livelineſs of your fancy may not deceive you: to refuſe, would be raiſing it ſtill higher. To ſee my Evelina happy, is to ſee myſelf without a wiſh; go then, my child, and may that Heaven which alone can direct, preſerve, and ſtrengthen you! To That, my love, will I daily offer prayers for your felicity; O may it guard, watch over you! defend you from danger, ſave you from diſtreſs, and keep vice as diſtant from your perſon as from your heart! And to Me, may it grant the ultimate bleſſing of cloſing theſe aged eyes in the arms of one ſo dear—ſo deſervedly beloved!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER X.

Evelina to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Queen-Ann-Street, London, Saturday April 2.

THIS moment arrived. Juſt going to Drury-Lane theatre. The celebrated Mr. Garrick performs Ranger. I am quite in extaſy. So is Miſs Mirvan. How fortunate, that he ſhould happen to play! We would not let Mrs. Mirvan reſt till ſhe conſented to go; her chief objection was to our dreſs, for we have had no time to *Londonize* ourſelves; but we teized her into compliance, and ſo we are to ſit in ſome obſcure place, that ſhe may not be ſeen. As to me, I ſhould be alike unknown in the moſt conſpicuous or moſt private part of the houſe.

I can write no more now. I have hardly time to breathe—only juſt this, the houſes and ſtreets are not quite ſo ſuperb as I expected. However, I have ſeen nothing yet, ſo I ought not to judge.

Well, adieu, my deareſt Sir, for the preſent; I could not forbear writing a few words inſtantly on my arrival; though I ſuppoſe my letter of thanks for your conſent is ſtill on the road.

Saturday

Saturday Night.

O my dear Sir, in what raptures am I returned! Well may Mr. Garrick be ſo celebrated, ſo univerſally admired—I had not any idea of ſo great a performer.

Such eaſe! ſuch vivacity in his manner! ſuch grace in his motions! ſuch fire and meaning in his eyes!—I could hardly believe he had ſtudied a written part, for every word ſeemed to be uttered from the impulſe of the moment.

His action—at once ſo graceful and ſo free!—his voice—ſo clear, ſo melodious, yet ſo wonderfully various in its tones—ſuch animation!—every look *ſpeaks!*

I would have given the world to have had the whole play acted over again. And when he danced—O how I envied Clarinda! I almoſt wiſhed to have jumped on the ſtage and joined them.

I am afraid you will think me mad, ſo I won't ſay any more; yet I really believe Mr. Garrick would make you mad too, if you could ſee him. I intend to aſk Mrs. Mirvan to go to the play every night while we ſtay in town. She is extremely kind to me, and Maria, her charming daughter, is the ſweeteſt girl in the world.

I ſhall write to you every evening all that paſſes in the day, and that in the ſame manner as, if I could ſee, I ſhould tell you.

Sunday.

This morning we went to Portland chapel, and afterwards we walked in the Mall of St. James's Park, which by no means anſwered my expectations: it is a long ſtraight walk, of dirty gravel, very uneaſy to the feet; and at each end, inſtead of an open proſpect, nothing is to be ſeen but houſes built of brick. When Mrs. Mirvan pointed out the *Palace* to me—I think I was never much more ſurpriſed.

However, the walk was very agreeable to us; every body looked gay, and ſeemed pleaſed, and the ladies were ſo much dreſſed, that Miſs Mirvan and I could do nothing but look at them. Mrs. Mirvan met ſeveral of her friends. No wonder, for I never ſaw ſo many people aſſembled together before. I looked about for ſome of *my* acquaintance, but in vain, for I ſaw not one perſon that I knew, which is very odd, for all the world ſeemed there.

Mrs. Mirvan ſays we are not to walk in the Park again next Sunday, even if we ſhould be in town, becauſe there is better company in Kenſington Gardens. But really if you had ſeen how much every body was dreſſed, you would not think that poſſible.

Monday.

Monday.

We are to go this evening to a private ball, given by Mrs. Stanley, a very fashionable lady of Mrs. Mirvan's acquaintance.

We have been *a shopping*, as Mrs. Mirvan calls it, all this morning, to buy silks, caps, gauzes, and so forth.

The shops are really very entertaining, especially the mercers; there seem to be six or seven men belonging to each shop, and every one took care, by bowing and smirking, to be noticed; we were conducted from one to another, and carried from room to room, with so much ceremony, that at first I was almost afraid to go on.

I thought I should never have chosen a silk, for they produced so many I knew not which to fix upon, and they recommended them all so strongly, that I fancy they thought I only wanted persuasion to buy every thing they shewed me. And, indeed, they took so much trouble, that I was almost ashamed I could not.

At the milliners, the ladies we met were so much dressed, that I should rather have imagined they were making visits than purchases. But what most diverted me was, that we were more frequently served by men than by women; and such men! so finical, so affected! they seemed to understand every

part of a woman's dreſs better than we do ourſelves; and they recommended caps and ribbands with an air of ſo much importance, that I wiſhed to aſk them how long they had left off wearing them.

The diſpatch with which they work in theſe great ſhops is amazing, for they have promiſed me a compleat ſuit of linen againſt the evening.

I have juſt had my hair dreſſed. You cant't think howoddly my head feels; full of powder and black pins, and a great *cuſhion* on the top of it. I believe you would hardly know me, for my face looks quite different to what it did before my hair was dreſſed. When I ſhall be able to make uſe of a comb for myſelf I cannot tell, for my hair is ſo much entangled, *frizled* they call it, that I fear it will be very difficult.

I am half afraid of this ball to-night, for, you know, I have never danced but at ſchool; however, Miſs Mirvan ſays there is nothing in it. Yet I wiſh it was over.

Adieu, my dear Sir; pray excuſe the wretched ſtuff I write, perhaps I may improve by being in this town, and then my letters will be leſs unworthy your reading. Mean time I am,

Your dutiful and affectionate,
though unpoliſhed,
EVELINA.

Poor

Poor Miſs Mirvan cannot wear one of the caps ſhe made, becauſe they dreſs her hair too large for them.

LETTER XI.

Evelina in continuation.

Queen-Ann-Street, April 5, Tueſday Morning.

I HAVE a vaſt deal to ſay, and ſhall give all this morning to my pen. As to my plan of writing every evening the adventures of the day, I find it impracticable; for the diverſions here are ſo very late, that if I begin my letters after them, I could not go to bed at all.

We paſt a moſt extraordinary evening. A *private* ball this was called, ſo I expected to have ſeen about four or five couple; but Lord! my dear Sir, I believe I ſaw half the world! Two very large rooms were full of company; in one, were cards for the elderly ladies, and in the other, were the dancers. My mamma Mirvan, for ſhe always calls me her child, ſaid ſhe would ſit with Maria and me till we were provided with partners, and then join the card-players.

The gentlemen, as they paſſed and re-

paſſed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their diſpoſal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands; and they ſauntered about, in a careleſs indolent manner, as if with a view to keep us in ſuſpenſe. I don't ſpeak of this in regard to Miſs Mirvan and myſelf only, but to the ladies in general; and I thought it ſo provoking, that I determined, in my own mind, that, far from humouring ſuch airs, I would rather not dance at all, than with any one who ſhould ſeem to think me ready to accept the firſt partner who would condeſcend to take me.

Not long after, a young man, who had for ſome time looked at us with a kind of negligent impertinence, advanced, on tiptoe, towards me; he had a ſet ſmile on his face, and his dreſs was ſo foppiſh, that I really believe he even wiſhed to be ſtared at; and yet he was very ugly.

Bowing almoſt to the ground, with a ſort of ſwing, and waving his hand with the greateſt conceit, after a ſhort and ſilly pauſe, he ſaid, "Madam—may I preſume?"—and ſtopt, offering to take my hand. I drew it back, but could ſcarce forbear laughing. "Allow me, Madam," (continued he, affectedly breaking off every half moment) "the honour and happineſs—if I am not ſo unhappy as to addreſs you too

too late—to have the happineſs and honour——"

Again he would have taken my hand, but, bowing my head, I begged to be excuſed, and turned to Miſs Mirvan to conceal my laughter. He then deſired to know if I had already engaged myſelf to ſome more fortunate man? I ſaid No, and that I believed I ſhould not dance at all. He would keep himſelf, he told me, diſengaged, in hopes I ſhould relent; and then, uttering ſome ridiculous ſpeeches of ſorrow and diſappointment, though his face ſtill wore the ſame invariable ſmile, he retreated.

It ſo happened, as we have ſince recollected, that during this little dialogue, Mrs. Mirvan was converſing with the lady of the houſe. And very ſoon after another gentleman, who ſeemed about ſix-and-twenty years old, gayly, but not foppiſhly, dreſſed, and indeed extremely handſome, with an air of mixed politeneſs and gallantry, deſired to know if I was engaged, or would honour him with my hand. So he was pleaſed to ſay, though I am ſure I know not what honour he could receive from me; but theſe ſort of expreſſions, I find, are uſed as words of courſe, without any diſtinction of perſons, or ſtudy of propriety.

Well, I bowed, and I am ſure I coloured; for indeed I was frightened at the thoughts of dancing before ſo many people, all ſtrangers, and, which was worſe, *with* a ſtranger; however, that was unavoidable, for though I looked round the room ſeveral times, I could not ſee one perſon that I knew. And ſo, he took my hand, and led me to join in the dance.

The minuets were over before we arrived, for we were kept late by the milliner's making us wait for our things.

He ſeemed very deſirous of entering into converſation with me; but I was ſeized with ſuch a panic, that I could hardly ſpeak a word, and nothing but the ſhame of ſo ſoon changing my mind, prevented my returning to my ſeat, and declining to dance at all.

He appeared to be ſurpriſed at my terror, which I believe was but too apparent: however, he aſked no queſtions, though I fear he muſt think it very ſtrange; for I did not chooſe to tell him it was owing to my never before dancing but with a ſchool-girl.

His converſation was ſenſible and ſpirited; his air and addreſs were open and noble; his manners gentle, attentive, and infinitely engaging; his perſon is all elegance,

gance, and his countenance, the moſt animated and expreſſive I have ever ſeen.

In a ſhort time we were joined by Miſs Mirvan, who ſtood next couple to us. But how was I ſtartled, when ſhe whiſpered me that my partner was a nobleman! This gave me a new alarm; how will he be provoked, thought I, when he finds what a ſimple ruſtic he has honoured with his choice! one whoſe ignorance of the world makes her perpetually fear doing ſomething wrong!

That he ſhould be ſo much my ſuperior every way, quite diſconcerted me; and you will ſuppoſe my ſpirits were not much raiſed, when I heard a lady, in paſſing us, ſay, "This is the moſt difficult dance I ever ſaw."

"O dear, then," cried Maria to her partner, "with your leave, I'll ſit down till the next."

"So will I too, then," cried I, "for I am ſure I can hardly ſtand."

"But you muſt ſpeak to your partner firſt," anſwered ſhe; for he had turned aſide to talk with ſome gentlemen. However, I had not ſufficient courage to addreſs him, and ſo away we all three tript, and ſeated ourſelves at another end of the room.

But, unfortunately for me, Miſs Mirvan ſoon after ſuffered herſelf to be prevailed upon

upon to attempt the dance; and juſt as ſhe roſe to go, ſhe cried, "My dear, yonder is your partner, Lord Orville, walking about the room in ſearch of you."

"Don't leave me then, dear girl!" cried I; but ſhe was obliged to go. And now I was more uneaſy than ever; I would have given the world to have ſeen Mrs. Mirvan, and begged of her to make my apologies; for what, thought I, can I poſſibly ſay to him in excuſe for running away? he muſt either conclude me a fool, or half mad; for any one brought up in the great world, and accuſtomed to its ways, can have no idea of ſuch ſort of fears as mine.

My confuſion encreaſed when I obſerved that he was every where ſeeking me, with apparent perplexity and ſurpriſe; but when, at laſt, I ſaw him move towards the place where I ſat, I was ready to ſink with ſhame and diſtreſs. I found it abſolutely impoſſible to keep my ſeat, becauſe I could not think of a word to ſay for myſelf, and ſo I roſe, and walked haſtily towards the card-room, reſolving to ſtay with Mrs. Mirvan the reſt of the evening, and not to dance at all. But before I could find her, Lord Orville ſaw and approached me.

He begged to know if I was not well? You may eaſily imagine how much I was embarraſſed. I made no anſwer, but hung my head, like a fool, and looked on my fan.

He

He then, with an air the moſt reſpectfully ſerious, aſked if he had been ſo unhappy as to offend me?

"No, indeed!" cried I: and, in hopes of changing the diſcourſe, and preventing his further inquiries, I deſired to know if he had ſeen the young lady who had been converſing with me?

No;—but would I honour him with any commands to her?

"O by no means!"

Was there any other perſon with whom I wiſhed to ſpeak?

I ſaid *no*, before I knew I had anſwered at all.

Should he have the pleaſure of bringing me any refreſhment?

I bowed, almoſt involuntarily. And away he flew.

I was quite aſhamed of being ſo troubleſome, and ſo much *above* myſelf as theſe ſeeming airs made me appear; but indeed I was too much confuſed to think or act with any conſiſtency.

If he had not been ſwift as lightning, I don't know whether I ſhould not have ſtolen away again; but he returned in a moment. When I had drank a glaſs of lemonade, he hoped, he ſaid, that I would again honour him with my hand, as a new dance was juſt begun. I had not the preſence of

of mind to ſay a ſingle word, and ſo I let him once more lead me to the place I had left.

Shocked to find how ſilly, how childiſh a part I had acted, my former fears of dancing before ſuch a company, and with ſuch a partner, returned more forcibly than ever. I ſuppoſe he perceived my uneaſineſs, for he intreated me to ſit down again, if dancing was diſagreeable to me. But I was quite ſatisfied with the folly I had already ſhewn, and therefore declined his offer, tho' I was really ſcarce able to ſtand.

Under ſuch conſcious diſadvantages, you may eaſily imagine, my dear Sir, how ill I acquitted myſelf. But, though I both expected and deſerved to find him very much mortified and diſpleaſed at his ill fortune in the choice he had made, yet, to my very great relief, he appeared to be even contented, and very much aſſiſted and encouraged me. Theſe people in high life have too much preſence of mind, I believe, to *ſeem* diſconcerted, or out of humour, however they may feel: for had I been the perſon of the moſt conſequence in the room, I could not have met with more attention and reſpect.

When the dance was over, ſeeing me ſtill very much flurried, he led me to a ſeat, ſaying

ſaying that he would not ſuffer me to fatigue myſelf from politeneſs.

And then, if my capacity, or even if my ſpirits had been better, in how animated a converſation might I have been engaged! It was then I ſaw that the rank of Lord Orville was his leaſt recommendation, his underſtanding and his manners being far more diſtinguiſhed. His remarks upon the company in general were ſo apt, ſo juſt, ſo lively, I am almoſt ſurpriſed myſelf that they did not re-animate me; but indeed I was too well convinced of the ridiculous part I had myſelf played before ſo nice an obſerver, to be able to enjoy his pleaſantry: ſo ſelf-compaſſion gave me feeling for others. Yet I had not the courage to attempt either to defend them, or to rally in my turn, but liſtened to him in ſilent embarraſſment.

When he found this, he changed the ſubject, and talked of public places, and public performers; but he ſoon diſcovered that I was totally ignorant of them.

He then, very ingeniouſly, turned the diſcourſe to the amuſements and occupations of the country.

It now ſtruck me, that he was reſolved to try whether or not I was capable of talking upon *any* ſubject. This put ſo great a conſtraint upon my thoughts, that I was unable to go further than a monoſyllable, and

and not even so far, when I could possibly avoid it.

We were sitting in this manner, he conversing with all gaiety, I looking down with all foolishness, when that fop who had first asked me to dance, with a most ridiculous solemnity, approached, and after a profound bow or two, said, "I humbly beg pardon, Madam,—and of you too, my Lord,—for breaking in upon such agreeable conversation—which must, doubtless, be much more delectable—than what I have the honour to offer—but—"

I interrupted him—I blush for my folly, —with laughing; yet I could not help it, for, added to the man's stately foppishness, (and he actually took snuff between every three words) when I looked round at Lord Orville, I saw such extreme surprise in his face,—the cause of which appeared so absurd, that I could not for my life preserve my gravity.

I had not laughed before from the time I had left Miss Mirvan, and I had much better have cried then; Lord Orville actually stared at me; the beau, I know not his name, looked quite enraged. "Refrain —Madam," (said he, with an important air,) "a few moments refrain!—I have but a sentence to trouble you with.—May I know

to

to what accident I muſt attribute not having the honour of your hand?"

"Accident, Sir!" repeated I, much aſtoniſhed.

"Yes, accident, Madam—for ſurely,—I muſt take the liberty to obſerve—pardon me Madam,—it ought to be no common one—that ſhould tempt a lady—ſo young a one too,—to be guilty of ill manners."

A confuſed idea now for the firſt time entered my head, of ſomething I had heard of the rules of an aſſembly; but I was never at one before,—I have only danced at ſchool,—and ſo giddy and heedleſs I was, that I had not once conſidered the impropriety of refuſing one partner, and afterwards accepting another. I was thunderſtruck at the recollection: but, while theſe thoughts were ruſhing into my head, Lord Orville, with ſome warmth, ſaid, "This lady, Sir, is incapable of meriting ſuch an accuſation!"

The creature—for I am very angry with him—made a low bow, and with a grin the moſt malicious I ever ſaw, "My Lord," ſaid he, "far be it from me to *accuſe* the lady, for having the diſcernment to diſtinguiſh and prefer—the ſuperior attractions of your Lordſhip."

Again he bowed, and walked off.

Was ever any thing ſo provoking? I was ready

ready to die with ſhame. "What a coxcomb!" exclaimed Lord Orville; while I, without knowing what I did, roſe haſtily, and moving off, "I can't imagine," cried I, "where Mrs. Mirvan has hid herſelf!"

"Give me leave to ſee," anſwered he. I bowed and ſat down again, not daring to meet his eyes; for what muſt he think of me, between my blunder, and the ſuppoſed preference?

He returned in a moment, and told me that Mrs. Mirvan was at cards, but would be glad to ſee me; and I went immediately. There was but one chair vacant, ſo, to my great relief, Lord Orville preſently left us. I then told Mrs. Mirvan my diſaſters, and ſhe good-naturedly blamed herſelf for not having better inſtructed me, but ſaid ſhe had taken it for granted that I muſt know ſuch common cuſtoms. However, the man may, I think, be ſatisfied with his pretty ſpeech, and carry his reſentment no farther.

In a ſhort time, Lord Orville returned. I conſented, with the beſt grace I could, to go down another dance, for I had had time to recollect myſelf, and therefore reſolved to uſe ſome exertion, and, if poſſible, appear leſs a fool than I had hitherto done; for it occurred to me that, inſignificant as I was, compared to a man of his rank and figure, yet, ſince he had been ſo unfortunate as to

make

make choice of me for a partner, why I ſhould endeavour to make the beſt of it.

The dance, however, was ſhort, and he ſpoke very little; ſo I had no opportunity of putting my reſolution in practice. He was ſatisfied, I ſuppoſe, with his former ſucceſsleſs efforts to draw me out: or, rather, I fancied, he had been inquiring *who I was*. This again diſconcerted me, and the ſpirits I had determined to exert, again failed me. Tired, aſhamed, and mortified, I begged to ſit down till we returned home, which I did ſoon after. Lord Orville did me the honour to hand me to the coach, talking all the way of the honour *I* had done *him*! O theſe faſhionable people!

Well, my dear Sir, was it not a ſtrange evening? I could not help being thus particular, becauſe, to me, every thing is ſo new. But it is now time to conclude. I am, with all love and duty,

Your

EVELINA.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Evelina in continuation.

Tuesday, April 5.

THERE is to be no end to the troubles of last night. I have this moment, between perſuaſion and laughter, gathered from Maria the moſt curious dialogue that ever I heard. You will, at firſt, be ſtartled at my vanity; but, my dear Sir, have patience!

It muſt have paſſed while I was ſitting with Mrs. Mirvan in the card-room. Maria was taking ſome refreſhment, and ſaw Lord Orville advancing for the ſame purpoſe himſelf; but he did not know her, though ſhe immediately recollected him. Preſently after, a very gay-looking man, ſtepping haſtily up to him, cried, "Why, my Lord, what have you done with your lovely partner?"

"*Nothing!*" anſwered Lord Orville, with a ſmile and a ſhrug.

"By Jove," cried the man, "ſhe is the moſt beautiful creature I ever ſaw in my life!"

Lord Orville, as he well might, laughed, but anſwered, "Yes, a pretty modeſt-looking girl."

"O my

"O my Lord!" cried the madman, "ſhe is an angel!"

"A *fiend* one," returned he.

"Why ay, my Lord, how ſtands ſhe as to that? She looks all intelligence and expreſſion."

"A poor weak girl!" anſwered Lord Orville, ſhaking his head.

"By Jove," cried the other, "I am glad to hear it!"

At that moment, the ſame odious creature who had been my former tormentor, joined them. Addreſſing Lord Orville with great reſpect, he ſaid, "I beg pardon, my Lord,—if I was—as I fear might be the caſe—rather too ſevere in my cenſure of the lady who is honoured with your protection—but, my Lord, ill-breeding is apt to provoke a man."

"Ill-breeding!" cried my unknown champion, "impoſſible! that elegant face can never be ſo vile a maſk!"

"O Sir, as to that," anſwered he, "you muſt allow *me* to judge; for though I pay all deference to your opinion—in other things,—yet I hope you will grant—and I appeal to your Lordſhip alſo—that I am not totally deſpicable as a judge of good or ill manners."

"I was ſo wholly ignorant," ſaid Lord Orville gravely, "of the provocation you might

might have had, that I could not but be surprized at your singular resentment."

"It was far from my intention," answered he, "to offend your Lordship; but really, for a person who is nobody, to give herself such airs,—I own I could not command my passions. For, my Lord, though I have made diligent enquiry—I cannot learn who she is."

"By what I can make out," cried my defender, "she must be a country parson's daughter."

"He! he! he! very good, 'pon honour!" cried the fop,—"well, so I could have sworn by her manners."

And then, delighted at his own wit, he laughed, and went away, as I suppose, to repeat it.

"But what the deuce is all this?" demanded the other.

"Why a very foolish affair," answered Lord Orville; "your Helen first refused this coxcomb, and then—danced with me. This is all I can gather of it."

"O Orville," returned he, "you are a happy man!—But, *ill bred?*—I can never believe it! And she looks too sensible to be *ignorant*."

"Whether ignorant or mischievous, I will not pretend to determine, but certain it is, she attended to all *I* could say to her, though

though I have really fatigued myſelf with fruitleſs endeavours to entertain her, with the moſt immoveable gravity; but no ſooner did Lovel begin his complaint, than ſhe was ſeized with a fit of laughing, firſt affronting the poor beau, and then enjoying his mortification."

"Ha! ha! ha! why there's ſome *genius* in that, my Lord, though perhaps rather—*ruſtic*."

Here Maria was called to dance, and ſo heard no more.

Now, tell me, my dear Sir, did you ever know any thing more provoking? "*A poor weak girl!*" "*ignorant or miſchievous!*" What mortifying words! I am reſolved, however, that I will never again be tempted to go to an aſſembly. I wiſh I had been in Dorſetſhire.

Well, after this, you will not be ſurpriſed that Lord Orville contented himſelf with an enquiry after our healths this morning, by his ſervant, without troubling himſelf to call; as Miſs Mirvan had told me he would: but perhaps it may be only a country cuſtom.

I would not live here for the world. I care not how ſoon we leave town. London ſoon grows tireſome. I wiſh the Captain would come. Mrs. Mirvan talks of

the opera for this evening; however, I am very indifferent about it.

Wedneſday Morning.

Well, my dear Sir, I have been pleaſed againſt my will, I could almoſt ſay, for I muſt own I went out in very ill-humour, which I think you cannot wonder at: but the muſic and the ſinging were charming; they ſoothed me into a pleaſure the moſt grateful, the beſt ſuited to my preſent diſpoſition in the world. I hope to perſuade Mrs. Mirvan to go again on Saturday. I wiſh the opera was every night. It is, of all entertainments, the ſweeteſt, and moſt delightful. Some of the ſongs ſeemed to melt my very ſoul. It was what they call a *ſerious* opera, as the *comic* firſt ſinger was ill.

To-night we go to Ranelagh. If any of thoſe three gentlemen who converſed ſo freely about me ſhould be there——but I won't think of it.

Thurſday Morning.

Well, my dear Sir, we went to Ranelagh. It is a charming place, and the brilliancy of the lights, on my firſt entrance, made me almoſt think I was in ſome inchanted caſtle, or fairy palace, for all looked like magic to me.

The very firſt perſon I ſaw was Lord Orville.

Orville. I felt ſo confuſed!—but he did not ſee me. After tea, Mrs. Mirvan being tired, Maria and I walked round the room alone. Then again we ſaw him, ſtanding by the orcheſtra. We, too, ſtopt to hear a ſinger. He bowed to me; I courteſied, and I am ſure I coloured. We ſoon walked on, not liking our ſituation: however, he did not follow us; and when we paſſed by the orcheſtra again, he was gone. Afterwards, in the courſe of the evening, we met him ſeveral times; but he was always with ſome party, and never ſpoke to us, tho' whenever he chanced to meet my eyes, he condeſcended to bow.

I cannot but be hurt at the opinion he entertains of me. It is true, my own behaviour incurred it—yet he is himſelf the moſt agreeable, and, ſeemingly, the moſt amiable man in the world, and therefore it is, that I am grieved to be thought ill of by him: for of whoſe eſteem ought we to be ambitious, if not of thoſe who moſt merit our own?—But it is too late to reflect upon this now. Well, I can't help it;—However, I think I have done with aſſemblies!

This morning was deſtined for *ſeeing ſights*, auctions, curious ſhops, and ſo forth; but my head ached, and I was not in a humour to be amuſed, and ſo I made them

go without me, though very unwillingly. They are all kindneſs.

And now I am ſorry I did not accompany them, for I know not what to do with myſelf. I had reſolved not to go to the play to-night; but I believe I ſhall. In ſhort, I hardly care whether I do or not.

* * * * *

I thought I had done wrong! Mrs. Mirvan and Maria have been half the town over, and ſo entertained!—while I, like a fool, ſtayed at home to do nothing. And, at an auction in Pall-mall, who ſhould they meet but Lord Orville! He ſat next to Mrs. Mirvan, and they talked a great deal together: but ſhe gave me no account of the converſation.

I may never have ſuch another opportunity of ſeeing London; I am quite ſorry that I was not of the party; but I deſerve this mortification, for having indulged my ill-humour.

Thurſday Night.

We are juſt returned from the play, which was King Lear, and has made me very ſad. We did not ſee any body we knew.

Well, adieu, it is too late to write more.

Friday.

Friday.

Captain Mirvan is arrived. I have not ſpirits to give an account of his introduction, for he has really ſhocked me. I do not like him. He ſeems to be ſurly, vulgar, and diſagreeable.

Almoſt the ſame moment that Maria was preſented to him, he began ſome rude jeſts upon the bad ſhape of her noſe, and called her a tall, ill-formed thing. She bore it with the utmoſt good humour; but that kind and ſweet-tempered woman, Mrs. Mirvan, deſerved a better lot. I am amazed ſhe would marry him.

For my own part, I have been ſo ſhy, that I have hardly ſpoken to him, or he to me. I cannot imagine why the family was ſo rejoiced at his return. If he had ſpent his whole life abroad, I ſhould have ſuppoſed they might rather have been thankful than ſorrowful. However, I hope they do not think ſo ill of him as I do. At leaſt, I am ſure they have too much prudence to make it known.

Saturday Night.

We have been to the opera, and I am ſtill more pleaſed than I was on Tueſday. I could have thought myſelf in paradiſe, but for the continual talking of the company around me. We ſat in the pit, where

every body was dreſſed in ſo high a ſtyle, that, if I had been leſs delighted with the performance, my eyes would have found me ſufficient entertainment from looking at the ladies.

I was very glad I did not ſit next the Captain, for he could not bear the muſic, or ſingers, and was extremely groſs in his obſervations on both. When the opera was over, we went into a place called the coffee-room, where ladies as well as gentlemen aſſemble. There are all ſorts of refreſhments, and the company walk about, and *chat* with the ſame eaſe and freedom as in a private room.

On Monday we go to a ridotto, and on Wedneſday we return to Howard Grove. The Captain ſays he won't ſtay here to be *ſmoked with filth* any longer; but, having been ſeven years *ſmoked with a burning ſun*, he will retire to the country, and ſink into a *fair-weather chap*.

Adieu, my dear Sir.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Evelina in continuation.

Tueſday, April 12.

My dear Sir,

WE came home from the ridotto ſo late, or rather, ſo early, that it was not poſſible for me to write. Indeed we did not *go*, you will be frightened to hear it,—till paſt eleven o'clock: but nobody does. A terrible reverſe of the order of nature! We ſleep with the ſun, and wake with the moon.

The room was very magnificent, the lights and decorations were brilliant, and the company gay and ſplendid. But I ſhould have told you, that I made many objections to being of the party, according to the reſolution I had formed. However, Maria laughed me out of my ſcruples, and ſo once again—I went to an aſſembly.

Miſs Mirvan danced a minuet, but I had not the courage to follow her example. In our walks I ſaw Lord Orville. He was quite alone, but did not obſerve us. Yet, as he ſeemed of no party, I thought it was not impoſſible that he might join us; and tho' I did not wiſh much to dance at all—yet, as I was more acquainted with him than with any

other perſon in the room, I muſt own I could not help thinking it would be infinitely more deſirable to dance again with him, than with an entire ſtranger. To be ſure, after all that had paſſed, it was very ridiculous to ſuppoſe it even probable, that Lord Orville would again honour me with his choice; yet I am compelled to confeſs my abſurdity, by way of explaining what follows.

Miſs Mirvan was ſoon engaged; and, preſently after, a very faſhionable, gay-looking man, who ſeemed about 30 years of age, addreſſed himſelf to me, and begged to have the honour of dancing with me. Now Maria's partner was a gentleman of Mrs. Mirvan's acquaintance; for ſhe had told us it was highly improper for young women to dance with ſtrangers, at any public aſſembly. Indeed it was by no means my wiſh ſo to do; yet I did not like to confine myſelf from dancing at all; neither did I dare refuſe this gentleman, as I had done Mr. Lovel, and then, if any acquaintance ſhould offer, accept him: and ſo, all theſe reaſons combining, induced me to tell him—yet I bluſh to write it to you! —that I was *already engaged*; by which I meant to keep myſelf at liberty to dance or not, as matters ſhould fall out.

I ſuppoſe my conſciouſneſs betrayed my artifice, for he looked at me as if incredulous;

lous; and, inſtead of being ſatisfied with my anſwer, and leaving me, according to my expectation, he walked at my ſide, and, with the greateſt eaſe imaginable, began a converſation, in the free ſtyle which only belongs to old and intimate acquaintance. But, what was moſt provoking, he aſked me a thouſand queſtions concerning *the partner to whom I was engaged.* And, at laſt, he ſaid, "Is it really poſſible that a man whom you have honoured with your acceptance, can fail to be at hand to profit from your goodneſs?"

I felt extremely fooliſh, and begged Mrs. Mirvan to lead to a ſeat, which ſhe very obligingly did. The Captain ſat next her, and, to my great ſurpriſe, this gentleman thought proper to follow, and ſeat himſelf next to me.

"What an inſenſible!" continued he; "why, Madam, you are miſſing the moſt delightful dance in the world! The man muſt be either mad, or a fool—Which do you incline to think him yourſelf?"

"Neither, Sir," anſwered I in ſome confuſion.

He begged my pardon for the freedom of his ſuppoſition, ſaying, "I really was off my guard, from aſtoniſhment that any man can be ſo much and ſo unaccountably his own enemy. But where, Madam, can

he poſſibly be?—has he left the room?—or has not he been in it?"

"Indeed, Sir," ſaid I peeviſhly, "I know nothing of him."

"I don't wonder that you are diſconcerted, Madam, it is really very provoking. The beſt part of the evening will be abſolutely loſt. He deſerves not that you ſhould wait for him."

"I do not, Sir," ſaid I, "and I beg you not to——"

"Mortifying, indeed, Madam," interrupted he, "a lady to wait for a gentleman:—O fie!—careleſs fellow!—what can detain him?—Will you give me leave to ſeek him?"

"If you pleaſe, Sir," anſwered I, quite terrified leſt Mrs. Mirvan ſhould attend to him, for ſhe looked very much ſurpriſed at ſeeing me enter into converſation with a ſtranger.

"With all my heart," cried he; "pray what coat has he on?"

"Indeed I never looked at it."

"Out upon him!" cried he; "What! did he addreſs you in a coat not worth looking at?—What a ſhabby wretch!"

How ridiculous! I really could not help laughing, which, I fear, encouraged him, for he went on.

"Charming creature!—and can you really bear ill uſage with ſo much ſweetneſs?—Can

—Can you, *like patience on a monument*, ſmile in the midſt of diſappointment?—For my part, though I am not the offended perſon, my indignation is ſo great, that I long to kick the fellow round the room!—unleſs, indeed,—(heſitating and looking earneſtly at me,) unleſs, indeed—it is a partner of your own *creating*?"

I was dreadfully abaſhed, and could not make any anſwer.

"But no!" cried he, (again, and with warmth,) "it cannot be that you are ſo cruel! Softneſs itſelf is painted in your eyes: —You could not, ſurely, have the barbarity ſo wantonly to trifle with my miſery."

I turned away from this nonſenſe, with real diſguſt. Mrs. Mirvan ſaw my confuſion, but was perplexed what to think of it, and I could not explain to her the cauſe, leſt the Captain ſhould hear me. I therefore propoſed to walk, ſhe conſented, and we all roſe; but, would you believe it? this man had the aſſurance to riſe too, and walk cloſe by my ſide, as if of my party!

"Now," cried he, "I hope we ſhall ſee this ingrate.—Is that he?"—pointing to an old man, who was lame, "or that?" And in this manner he aſked me of whoever was old or ugly in the room. I made no ſort of anſwer; and when he found that I was reſolutely ſilent, and walked on, as much

as I could, without obſerving him, he ſuddenly ſtamped his foot, and cried out, in a paſſion, "Fool! ideot! booby!"

I turned haſtily toward him: "O Madam," continued he, "forgive my vehemence, but I am diſtracted to think there ſhould exiſt a wretch who can ſlight a bleſſing for which I would forfeit my life!—O! that I could but meet him! I would ſoon——But I grow angry: pardon me, Madam, my paſſions are violent, and your injuries affect me!"

I began to apprehend he was a madman, and ſtared at him with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment. "I ſee you are moved, Madam," ſaid he, "generous creature!—but don't be alarmed, I am cool again, I am indeed,—upon my ſoul I am,—I entreat you, moſt lovely of mortals! I entreat you to be eaſy."

"Indeed, Sir," ſaid I very ſeriouſly, "I muſt inſiſt upon your leaving me; you are quite a ſtranger to me, and I am both unuſed, and averſe to your language and your manners."

This ſeemed to have ſome effect on him. He made me a low bow, begged my pardon, and vowed he would not for the world offend me.

"Then, Sir, you muſt leave me," cried I.

"I am gone, Madam, I am gone!" with a moſt tragical air; and he marched away,

away, a quick pace, out of ſight in a moment; but before I had time to congratulate myſelf, he was again at my elbow.

"And could you really let me go, and not be ſorry?—Can you ſee me ſuffer torments inexpreſſible, and yet retain all your favour for that miſcreant who flies you?—Ungrateful puppy!—I could baſtinado him!"

"For Heaven's ſake, my dear," cried Mrs. Mirvan, "who is he talking of?"

"Indeed—I do not know, Madam," ſaid I, "but I wiſh he would leave me."

"What's all that there?" cried the Captain.

The man made a low bow, and ſaid, "Only, Sir, a ſlight objection which this young lady makes to dancing with me, and which I am endeavouring to obviate. I ſhall think myſelf greatly honoured, if you will intercede for me."

"That lady, Sir," ſaid the Captain coldly, "is her own miſtreſs." And he walked ſullenly on.

"You, Madam," ſaid the man, (who looked delighted, to Mrs. Mirvan,) "you, I hope, will have the goodneſs to ſpeak for me."

"Sir," anſwered ſhe gravely, "I have not the pleaſure of being acquainted with you."

"I hope when you have, Ma'am," cried he,

he, (undaunted) "you will honour me with your approbation; but, while I am yet unknown to you, it would be truely generous in you to countenance me; and, I flatter myself, Madam, that you will not have cause to repent it."

Mrs. Mirvan, with an embarrassed air, replied, "I do not at all mean, Sir, to doubt your being a gentleman,—but,—"

"But *what*, Madam?—that doubt removed, why a *but?*"

"Well, Sir," said Mrs. Mirvan, (with a good-humoured smile,) "I will even treat you with your own plainness, and try what effect that will have on you: I must therefore tell you, once for all,——"

"O pardon me, Madam!" interrupted he eagerly, "you must not proceed with those words, *once for all*; no, if *I* have been too *plain*, and though a *man*, deserve a rebuke, remember, dear ladies, that if you *copy*, you ought, in justice, to *excuse* me."

We both stared at the man's strange behaviour.

"Be nobler than your sex," continued he, turning to me, "honour me with one dance, and give up the ingrate who has merited so ill your patience."

Mrs. Mirvan looked with astonishment at us both. "Who does he speak of, my dear?—you never mentioned——"

"O Madam!" exclaimed he, "he was not worth mentioning—it is pity he was ever thought of; but let us forget his exiſtence. One dance is all I ſolicit; permit me, Madam, the honour of this young lady's hand; it will be a favour I ſhall ever moſt gratefully acknowledge."

"Sir," anſwered ſhe, "favours and ſtrangers have with me no connection."

"If you have hitherto," ſaid he, "confined your benevolence to your intimate friends, ſuffer me to be the firſt for whom your charity is enlarged."

"Well, Sir, I know not what to ſay to you,—but—"

He ſtopt her *but* with ſo many urgent entreaties, that ſhe at laſt told me, I muſt either go down one dance, or avoid his importunities by returning home. I heſitated which alternative to chuſe; but this impetuous man at length prevailed, and I was obliged to conſent to dance with him.

And thus was my deviation from truth puniſhed; and thus did this man's determined boldneſs conquer.

During the dance, before we were too much engaged in it for converſation, he was extremely provoking about *my partner*, and tried every means in his power to make me own that I had deceived him; which, though I would not ſo far humble myſelf as to acknowledge, was, indeed, but too obvious.

Lord

Lord Orville, I fancy, did not dance at all; he ſeemed to have a large acquaintance, and joined ſeveral different parties: but you will eaſily ſuppoſe I was not much pleaſed to ſee him, in a few minutes after I was gone, walk towards the place I had juſt left, and bow to, and join Mrs. Mirvan!

How unlucky I thought myſelf, that I had not longer withſtood this ſtranger's importunities! The moment we had gone down the dance, I was haſtening away from him, but he ſtopt me, and ſaid that I could by no means return to my party, without giving offence, before we had *done our duty of walking up the dance.* As I know nothing at all of theſe rules and cuſtoms, I was obliged to ſubmit to his directions; but I fancy I looked rather uneaſy, for he took notice of my inattention, ſaying, in his free way, "Whence that anxiety?—Why are thoſe lovely eyes perpetually averted?"

"I wiſh you would ſay no more to me, Sir," (cried I peeviſhly) "you have already deſtroyed all my happineſs for this evening."

"Good Heaven! what is it I have done?—How have I merited this ſcorn?"

"You have tormented me to death; you have forced me from my friends, and intruded yourſelf upon me, againſt my will, for a partner."

"Surely,

"Surely, my dear Madam, we ought to be better friends, ſince there ſeems to be ſomething of ſympathy in the frankneſs of our diſpoſitions.—And yet, were you not an angel—how do you think I could brook ſuch contempt?"

"If I have offended you," cried I, "you have but to leave me—and O how I wiſh you would!"

"My dear creature," (ſaid he, half laughing) "why where could you be educated?"

"Where I moſt ſincerely wiſh I now was!"

"How conſcious you muſt be, all beautiful that you are, that thoſe charming airs ſerve only to heighten the bloom of your complexion!"

"Your freedom, Sir, where you are more acquainted, may perhaps be leſs diſagreeable; but to *me*——"

"You do me juſtice," (cried he, interrupting me) "yes, I do indeed improve upon acquaintance; you will hereafter be quite charmed with me."

"Hereafter, Sir, I hope I ſhall never—"

"O huſh!—huſh!—have you forgot the ſituation in which I found you?—Have you forgot, that when deſerted, I purſued you,—when betrayed, I adored you?—but for me——"

"But

"But for you, Sir, I might, perhaps, have been happy."

"What then, am I to conclude that, *but for me*, your *partner* would have appeared?—poor fellow!—and did my preſence awe him?"

"I wiſh *his* preſence, Sir, could awe *you!*"

"His preſence!—perhaps then you ſee him?"

"Perhaps, Sir, I do;" cried I, quite wearied of his raillery.

"Where?—where?—for Heaven's ſake ſhew me the wretch!"

"Wretch, Sir?"

"O, a very ſavage!—a ſneaking, ſhame-faced, deſpicable puppy!"

I know not what bewitched me—but my pride was hurt, and my ſpirits were tired, and—in ſhort—I had the folly, looking at Lord Orville, to repeat, "*Deſpicable*, you think?"

His eyes inſtantly followed mine; "Why is *that* the gentleman?"

I made no anſwer; I could not affirm, and I would not deny;—for I hoped to be relieved from his teizing, by his miſtake.

The very moment we had done what he called our duty, I eagerly deſired to return to Mrs. Mirvan.

"To

"To your *partner*, I preſume, Madam?" ſaid he, very gravely.

This quite confounded me; I dreaded leſt this miſchievous man, ignorant of his rank, ſhould addreſs himſelf to Lord Orville, and ſay ſomething which might expoſe my artifice. Fool! to involve myſelf in ſuch difficulties! I now feared what I had before wiſhed, and, therefore, to *avoid* Lord Orville, I was obliged myſelf to *propoſe* going down another dance, though I was ready to ſink with ſhame while I ſpoke.

"But your *partner*, Ma'am?" (ſaid he, affecting a very ſolemn air) "perhaps he may reſent my detaining you: if you will give me leave to aſk his conſent—"

"Not for the univerſe."

"Who is he, Madam?"

I wiſhed myſelf a hundred miles off. He repeated his queſtion, "What is his name?"

"Nothing—nobody—I don't know.—"

He aſſumed a moſt important ſolemnity; "How!—not know?—Give me leave, my dear Madam, to recommend this caution to you; Never dance in public with a ſtranger,—with one whoſe name you are unacquainted with,—who may be a mere adventurer,—a man of no character,—conſider to what impertinence you may expoſe yourſelf."

Was

"Was ever any thing ſo ridiculous? I could not help laughing, in ſpite of my vexation.

At this inſtant, Mrs. Mirvan, followed by Lord Orville, walked up to us. You will eaſily believe it was not difficult for me to recover my gravity; but what was my conſternation, when this ſtrange man, deſtined to be the ſcourge of my artifice, exclaimed, "Ha! my Lord Orville!—I proteſt I did not know your Lordſhip. What can I ſay for my uſurpation?—Yet, faith, my Lord, ſuch a prize was not to be neglected."

My ſhame and confuſion were unſpeakable. Who could have ſuppoſed or foreſeen that this man knew Lord Orville! But falſehood is not more unjuſtifiable than unſafe.

Lord Orville—well he might,—looked all amazement.

"The philoſophic coldneſs of your Lordſhip," continued this odious creature, "every man is not endowed with. I have uſed my utmoſt endeavours to entertain this lady, though I fear without ſucceſs; and your Lordſhip will not be a little flattered, if acquainted with the difficulty which attended my procuring the honour of only one dance." Then, turning to me, who was ſinking with ſhame, while Lord Orville

ville ſtood motionleſs, and Mrs. Mirvan aſtoniſhed,—he ſuddenly ſeized my hand, ſaying, "Think, my Lord, what muſt be my reluctance to reſign this fair hand to your Lordſhip!"

In the ſame inſtant, Lord Orville took it of him; I coloured violently, and made an effort to recover it. "You do me too much honour, Sir," cried he, (with an air of gallantry, preſſing it to his lips before he let it go) "however, I ſhall be happy to profit by it, if this lady," (turning to Mrs. Mirvan) "will permit me to ſeek for her party."

To compel him thus to dance, I could not endure, and eagerly called out, "By no means—not for the world!—I muſt beg——"

"Will you honour *me*, Madam, with your commands," cried my tormentor; "may *I* ſeek the lady's party?"

"No, Sir," anſwered I, turning from him.

"What *ſhall* be done, my dear?" ſaid Mrs. Mirvan.

"Nothing, Ma'am;—any thing, I mean——"

"But do you dance, or not? you ſee his Lordſhip waits."

"I hope not,—I beg that—I would not for the world—I am ſure I ought to—to—"

I could not ſpeak; but that confident man,

man, determined to discover whether or not I had deceived him, said to Lord Orville, who stood suspended, "My Lord, this affair, which, at present, seems perplexed, I will briefly explain;—this lady proposed to me another dance,—nothing could have made me more happy—I only wished for your Lordship's permission, which, if now granted, will, I am persuaded, set every thing right."

I glowed with indignation. "No, Sir—It is your absence, and that alone, can set every thing right."

"For Heaven's sake, my dear," (cried Mrs. Mirvan, who could no longer contain her surprize,) "what does all this mean?—were you pre-engaged?—had Lord Orville——"

"No, Madam, cried I,—only—only I did not know that gentleman,—and so,—and so I thought—I intended—I—"

Overpowered by all that had passed, I had not strength to make my mortifying explanation;—my spirits quite failed me, and I burst into tears.

They all seemed shocked and amazed.

"What is the matter, my dearest love?" cried Mrs. Mirvan, with the kindest concern.

"What have I done!" exclaimed my evil genius, and ran officiously for a glass of water.

However,

However, a hint was ſufficient for Lord Orville, who comprehended all I would have explained. He immediately led me to a ſeat, and ſaid, in a low voice, "Be not diſtreſſed, I beſeech you; I ſhall ever think my name honoured by your making uſe of it."

This politeneſs relieved me. A general murmur had alarmed Miſs Mirvan, who flew inſtantly to me; while Lord Orville, the moment Mrs. Mirvan had taken the water, led my tormentor away.

"For Heaven's ſake, dear Madam," cried I, "let me go home,—indeed, I cannot ſtay here any longer."

"Let us all go," cried my kind Maria.

"But the Captain—what will he ſay—I had better go home in a chair."

Mrs. Mirvan conſented, and I roſe to depart. Lord Orville and that man both came to me. The firſt, with an attention I had but ill merited from him, led me to a chair, while the other followed, peſtering me with apologies. I wiſhed to have made mine to Lord Orville, but was too much aſhamed.

It was about one o'clock. Mrs. Mirvan's ſervants ſaw me home.

And now,—what again ſhall ever tempt me to an aſſembly? I dread to hear what you will think of me, my moſt dear and honoured Sir: you will need your utmoſt partiality,

partiality, to receive me without diſpleaſure.

This morning Lord Orville has ſent to enquire after our healths: and Sir Clement Willoughby, for that, I find, is the name of my perſecutor, has called: but I would not go down ſtairs till he was gone.

And now, my dear Sir, I can ſomewhat account for the ſtrange, provoking, and ridiculous conduct of this Sir Clement laſt night; for Miſs Mirvan ſays, he is the very man with whom ſhe heard Lord Orville converſing at Mrs. Stanley's, when I was ſpoken of in ſo mortifying a manner. He was pleaſed to ſay he was glad to hear I was a fool, and therefore, I ſuppoſe, he concluded he might talk as much nonſenſe as he pleaſed to me: however, I am very indifferent as to his opinion;—but for Lord Orville,—if then he thought me an idiot, now, I am ſure, he muſt ſuppoſe me both bold and preſuming. Make uſe of his name!—what impertinence!—he can never know how it happened,—he can only imagine it was from an exceſs of vanity:—well, however, I ſhall leave this bad city to-morrow, and never again will I enter it!

The Captain intends to take us to-night to the Fantocini. I cannot bear that Captain; I can give you no idea how groſs he is.

is. I heartily rejoice that he was not preſent at the diſagreeable concluſion of yeſterday's adventure, for I am ſure he would have contributed to my confuſion; which might perhaps have diverted him, as he ſeldom or never ſmiles but at ſome other perſon's expence.

And here I conclude my London letters,—and without any regret, for I am too inexperienced and ignorant to conduct myſelf with propriety in this town, where every thing is new to me, and many things are unaccountable and perplexing.

Adieu, my dear Sir; Heaven reſtore me ſafely to you! I wiſh I was to go immediately to Berry Hill; yet the wiſh is ungrateful to Mrs. Mirvan, and therefore I will repreſs it. I ſhall write an account of the Fantocini from Howard Grove. We have not been to half the public places that are now open, though I dare ſay you will think we have been to all. But they are almoſt as innumerable as the perſons who fill them.

LETTER XIV.

Evelina in continuation.

Queen-Ann-Street, April 13.

HOW much will you be ſurpriſed, my deareſt Sir, at receiving another letter from London of your Evelina's writing! But, believe me, it was not my fault, neither is it my happineſs, that I am ſtill here: our journey has been poſtponed by an accident equally unexpected and diſagreeable.

We went laſt night to ſee the Fantocini, where we had infinite entertainment from the performance of a little comedy, in French and Italian, by puppets, ſo admirably managed, that they both aſtoniſhed and diverted us all, except the Captain, who has a fixed and moſt prejudiced hatred of whatever is not Engliſh.

When it was over, while we waited for the coach, a tall elderly woman bruſhed quickly paſt us, calling out, "My God! what ſhall I do?"

"Why what *would* you do?" cried the Captain.

"*Ma foi, Monſieur*," anſwered ſhe, "I have loſt my company, and in this place I don't know nobody."

There

There was ſomething foreign in her accent, though it was difficult to diſcover whether ſhe was an Engliſh or a French woman. She was very well dreſſed, and ſeemed ſo entirely at a loſs what to do, that Mrs. Mirvan propoſed to the Captain to aſſiſt her.

"Aſſiſt her!" cried he, "ay, with all my heart; — let a link-boy call her a coach."

There was not one to be had, and it rained very faſt.

"*Mon Dieu*," exclaimed the ſtranger, "what ſhall become of me? *Je ſuis au déſeſpoir!*"

"Dear Sir," cried Miſs Mirvan, "pray let us take the poor lady into our coach, She is quite alone, and a foreigner—."

"She's never the better for that," anſwered he: "ſhe may be a woman of the town, for any thing you know."

"She does not appear ſuch," ſaid Mrs. Mirvan, "and indeed ſhe ſeems ſo much diſtreſſed, that we ſhall but follow the golden rule, if we carry her to her lodgings."

"You are mighty fond of new acquaintance," returned he, "but firſt let us know if ſhe be going our way."

Upon enquiry, we found that ſhe lived in Oxford Road, and, after ſome diſputing, the Captain, ſurlily, and with a very bad

grace, consented to admit her into his coach; though he soon convinced us, that he was determined she should not be too much obliged to him, for he seemed absolutely bent upon quarrelling with her: for which strange inhospitality, I can assign no other reason, than that she appeared to be a foreigner.

The conversation began, by her telling us, that she had been in England only two days; that the gentlemen belonging to her were Parisians, and had left her, to see for a hackney-coach, as her own carriage was abroad; and that she had waited for them till she was quite frightened, and concluded that they had lost themselves.

"And pray," said the Captain, "why did you go to a public place without an Englishman?"

"*Ma foi*, Sir," answered she, "because none of my acquaintance is in town."

"Why then," said he, "I'll tell you what; your best way is to go out of it yourself."

"*Pardi*, *Monsieur*," returned she, "and so I shall; for, I promise you, I think the English a parcel of brutes; and I'll go back to France as fast as I can, for I would not live among none of you."

"Who wants you?" cried the Captain; "do you suppose, Madam French, we have

not enough of other nations to pick our pockets already? I'll warrant you, there's no need for you for to put in your oar."

"Pick your pockets, Sir! I wiſh nobody wanted to pick your pockets no more than I do; and I'll promiſe you, you'd be ſafe enough. But there's no nation under the ſun can beat the Engliſh for ill-politeneſs; for my part, I hate the very ſight of them, and ſo I ſhall only juſt viſit a perſon of quality or two, of my particular acquaintance, and then I ſhall go back again to France."

"Ay, do;" cried he, "and then go to the devil together, for that's the fitteſt voyage for the French and the quality."

"We'll take care, however," cried the ſtranger, with great vehemence, "not to admit none of your vulgar, unmannered Engliſh among us."

"O never fear," (returned he coolly) "we ſhan't diſpute the point with you; you and the quality may have the devil all to yourſelves."

Deſirous of changing the ſubject of a converſation which now became very alarming, Miſs Mirvan called out, "Lord, how ſlow the man drives!"

"Never mind, Moll," ſaid her father, "I'll warrant you he'll drive faſt enough to-

morrow, when you are going to Howard Grove!"

"To Howard Grove!" exclaimed the ſtranger; "why, *mon Dieu*, do you know Lady Howard?"

"Why, what if we do?" anſwered he, "that's nothing to you; ſhe's none of *your* quality, I'll promiſe you."

"Who told you that," cried ſhe, "you don't know nothing about the matter; beſides, you're the ill-bredeſt perſon ever I ſee; and as to your knowing Lady Howard, I don't believe no ſuch a thing; unleſs, indeed, you are her ſteward."

The Captain, ſwearing terribly, ſaid, with great fury, "*you* would much ſooner be taken for her waſh-woman."

"Her waſh-woman, indeed!—Ha, ha, ha!—why you han't no eyes; did you ever ſee a waſh-woman in ſuch a gown as this?—beſides, I'm no ſuch mean perſon, for I'm as good as Lady Howard, and as rich too; and beſides, I'm now come to England to viſit her."

"You may ſpare yourſelf that there trouble," ſaid the Captain, "ſhe has paupers enough about her already."

"Paupers, Mr.!—no more a pauper than yourſelf, nor ſo much neither;—but you are a low, dirty fellow, and I ſhan't ſtoop to take no more notice of you."

"Dirty

"Dirty fellow!" (exclaimed the Captain, ſeizing both her wriſts) "hark you, Mrs. Frog, you'd beſt hold your tongue, for I muſt make bold to tell you, if you don't, that I ſhall make no ceremony of tripping you out of the window; and there you may lie in the mud till ſome of your *Monſeers* come to help you out of it."

Their encreaſing paſſion quite terrified us; and Mrs. Mirvan was beginning to remonſtrate with the Captain, when we were all ſilenced by what follows.

"Let me go, villain that you are, let me go, or I'll promiſe you I'll get you put to priſon for this uſage; I'm no common perſon, I aſſure you, and, *ma foi*, I'll go to Juſtice Fielding about you; for I'm a perſon of faſhion, and I'll make you know it, or my name i'n't Duval."

I heard no more: amazed, frightened, and unſpeakably ſhocked, an involuntary exclamation of *Gracious Heaven!* eſcaped me, and, more dead than alive, I ſunk into Mrs. Mirvan's arms. But let me draw a veil over a ſcene too cruel for a heart ſo compaſſionately tender as yours; it is ſufficient that you know this ſuppoſed foreigner proved to be Madame Duval,—the grandmother of your Evelina!

O, Sir, to diſcover ſo near a relation in a woman who had thus introduced herſelf!—

what would become of me, were it not for you, my protector, my friend, and my refuge?

My extreme concern, and Mrs. Mirvan's ſurpriſe, immediately betrayed me. But I will not ſhock you with the manner of her acknowledging me, or the bitterneſs, the *groſsneſs*—I cannot otherwiſe expreſs myſelf,—with which ſhe ſpoke of thoſe unhappy paſt tranſactions you have ſo pathetically related to me. All the miſery of a much-injured parent, dear, though never ſeen, regretted, though never known, crowded ſo forcibly upon my memory, that they rendered this interview—one only excepted—the moſt afflicting I can ever know.

When we ſtopt at her lodgings, ſhe deſired me to accompany her into the houſe, and ſaid ſhe could eaſily procure a room for me to ſleep in. Alarmed and trembling, I turned to Mrs. Mirvan. "My daughter, Madam," ſaid that ſweet woman, "cannot ſo abruptly part with her young friend; you muſt allow a little time to wean them from each other."

"Pardon me, Ma'am," anſwered Madame Duval, (who, from the time of her being known, ſomewhat ſoftened her manners) "Miſs can't poſſibly be ſo nearly connected to this child as I am."

—"No matter for that," cried the Captain,

tain, (who eſpouſed my cauſe to ſatisfy his own pique, though an awkward apology had paſſed between them) "ſhe was ſent to us, and ſo, d'yeſee, we don't chuſe for to part with her."

I promiſed to wait upon her at what time ſhe pleaſed the next day, and, after a ſhort debate, ſhe deſired me to breakfaſt with her, and we proceeded to Queen-Ann-ſtreet.

What an unfortunate adventure! I could not cloſe my eyes the whole night. A thouſand times I wiſhed I had never left Berry Hill; however, my return thither ſhall be accelerated to the utmoſt of my power; and, once more in that abode of tranquil happineſs, I will ſuffer no temptation to allure me elſewhere.

Mrs. Mirvan was ſo kind as to accompany me to Madame Duval's houſe this morning. The Captain too, offered his ſervice, which I declined, from a fear ſhe ſhould ſuppoſe I meant to inſult her.

She frowned moſt terribly upon Mrs. Mirvan, but ſhe received me with as much tenderneſs as I believe ſhe is capable of feeling. Indeed, our meeting ſeems really to have affected her; for when, overcome by the variety of emotions which the ſight of her occaſioned, I almoſt fainted in her arms, ſhe burſt into tears, and ſaid, "Let me not loſe my poor daughter a ſecond

time!" This unexpected humanity ſoftened me extremely; but ſhe very ſoon excited my warmeſt indignation, by the ungrateful mention ſhe made of the beſt of men, my dear, and moſt generous ben-factor. However, grief and anger mutually gave way to terror, upon her avowing the intention of her viſiting England was to make me return with her to France. This, ſhe ſaid, was a plan ſhe had formed from the inſtant ſhe had heard of my birth, which, ſhe proteſted, did not reach her ears till I muſt have been twelve years of age; but Monſieur Duval, who, ſhe declared, was the worſt huſband in the world, would not permit her to do any thing ſhe wiſhed: he had been dead but three months, which had been employed in arranging certain affairs, that were no ſooner ſettled, than ſhe ſet off for England. She was already out of mourning, for ſhe ſaid nobody here could tell how long ſhe had been a widow.

She muſt have been married very early in life; what her age is, I do not know, but ſhe really looks to be leſs than fifty. She dreſſes very gaily, paints very high, and the traces of former beauty are ſtill very viſible in her face.

I know not when, or how, this viſit would have ended, had not the Captain called for Mrs. Mirvan, and abſolutely inſiſted

ſiſted upon my attending her. He is become, very ſuddenly, ſo warmly my friend, that I quite dread his officiouſneſs. Mrs. Mirvan, however, whoſe principal ſtudy ſeems to be healing thoſe wounds which her huſband inflicts, appeaſed Madame Duval's wrath, by a very polite invitation to drink tea and ſpend the evening here. Not without great difficulty was the Captain prevailed upon to defer his journey ſome time longer; but what could be done? it would have been indecent for me to have quitted town the very inſtant I diſcovered that Madame Duval was in it; and to have ſtayed here ſolely under her protection—Mrs. Mirvan, thank Heaven, was too kind for ſuch a thought. That ſhe ſhould follow us to Howard Grove, I almoſt equally dreaded; it is, therefore, determined that we remain in London for ſome days, or a week: though the Captain has declared that the *old French bag*, as he is pleaſed to call her, ſhall fare never the better for it.

My only hope, is to get ſafe to Berry Hill; where, counſelled and ſheltered by you, I ſhall have nothing more to fear. Adieu, my ever dear and moſt honoured Sir! I ſhall have no happineſs till I am again with you!

LETTER XV.

Mr. Villars to Evelina.

Berry Hill, April 16.

IN the belief and hope that my Evelina would ere now have bid adieu to London, I had intended to have deferred writing, till I heard of her return to Howard Grove; but the letter I have this moment received, with intelligence of Madame Duval's arrival in England, demands an immediate answer.

Her journey hither equally grieves and alarms me: how much did I pity my child, when I read of a discovery at once so unexpected and unwished! I have long dreaded this meeting and its consequence; to claim you, seems naturally to follow acknowledging you: I am well acquainted with her disposition, and have for many years foreseen the contest which now threatens us.

Cruel as are the circumstances of this affair, you must not, my love, suffer it to depress your spirits; remember, that while life is lent me, I will devote it to your service; and, for future time, I will make such provision as shall seem to me most conducive to your future happiness. Se-

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cure of my protection, and relying on my tenderneſs, let no apprehenſions of Madame Duval diſturb your peace; conduct yourſelf towards her with all the reſpect and deference due to ſo near a relation, remembering always, that the failure of duty on her part, can by no means juſtify any neglect on yours: indeed, the more forcibly you are ſtruck with improprieties and miſconduct in another, the greater ſhould be your obſervance and diligence to avoid even the ſhadow of ſimilar errors. Be careful, therefore, that no remiſſneſs of attention, no indifference of obliging, make known to her the independence I aſſure you of; but when ſhe fixes the time for her leaving England, truſt to me the taſk of refuſing your attending her: diſagreeable to myſelf I own it will be, yet to you, it would be improper, if not impoſſible.

In regard to her opinion of me, I am more ſorry than ſurpriſed at her determined blindneſs; the palliation which ſhe feels the want of, for her own conduct, leads her to ſeek for failings in all who were concerned in thoſe unhappy tranſactions which ſhe has ſo much reaſon to lament. And this, as it is the cauſe, ſo we muſt, in ſome meaſure, conſider it as the excuſe of her inveteracy.

How grateful to me are your wiſhes to return to Berry Hill! your lengthened ſtay

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in London, and the diſſipation in which I find you are involved, fill me with uneaſineſs: I mean not however that I would have you ſequeſter yourſelf from the party to which you belong, ſince Mrs. Mirvan might thence infer a reproof which your youth and her kindneſs would render inexcuſable. I will not, therefore, enlarge upon this ſubject, but content myſelf with telling you, that I ſhall heartily rejoice when I hear of your ſafe arrival at Howard Grove, for which place I hope you will be preparing at the time you receive this letter.

I cannot too much thank you, my beſt Evelina, for the minuteneſs of your communications; continue to me this indulgence, for I ſhould be miſerable if in ignorance of your proceedings.

How new to you is the ſcene of life in which you are now engaged,—balls—plays—operas—ridottos—Ah, my child! at your return hither, how will you bear the change? My heart trembles for your future tranquillity.—Yet I will hope every thing from the unſullied whiteneſs of your ſoul, and the native livelineſs of your diſpoſition.

I am ſure I need not ſay, how much more I was pleaſed with the miſtakes of your inexperience at the private ball, than with the attempted adoption of more faſhionable manners at the ridotto. But your confuſion and

and mortifications were ſuch as to entirely ſilence all reproofs on my part.

I hope you will ſee no more of Sir Clement Willoughby, whoſe converſation and boldneſs are extremely diſguſtful to me. I was gratified by the good-nature of Lord Orville, upon your making uſe of his name, but I hope you will never again put it to ſuch a trial.

Heaven bleſs thee, my dear child, and grant that neither misfortune nor vice may ever rob thee of that gaiety of heart which, reſulting from innocence, while it conſtitutes your own, contributes alſo to the felicity of all who know you!

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XVI.

Evelina to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Queen-Ann-ſtreet, Thurſday morning, April 14.

BEFORE our dinner was over yeſterday, Madame Duval came to tea: though it will leſſen your ſurpriſe, to hear that it was near five o'clock, for we never dine till the day is almoſt over. She was aſked into another room, while the table was cleared,

cleared, and then was invited to partake of the deſert.

She was attended by a French gentleman, whom ſhe introduced by the name of Monſieur Du Bois: Mrs. Mirvan received them both with her uſual politeneſs; but the Captain looked very much diſpleaſed, and after a ſhort ſilence, very ſternly ſaid to Madame Duval, "Pray who aſked you to bring that there ſpark with you?"

"O," cried ſhe, "I never go no-where without him."

Another ſhort ſilence enſued, which was terminated by the Captain's turning roughly to the foreigner, and ſaying, "Do you know, *Monſeer*, that you're the firſt Frenchman I ever let come into my houſe?"

Monſieur Du Bois made a profound bow. He ſpeaks no Engliſh, and underſtands it ſo imperfectly, that he might, poſſibly, imagine he had received a compliment.

Mrs. Mirvan endeavoured to divert the Captain's ill-humour, by ſtarting new ſubjects; but he left to her all the trouble of ſupporting them, and leant back in his chair in gloomy ſilence, except when any opportunity offered of uttering ſome ſarcaſm upon the French. Finding her efforts to render the evening agreeable were fruitleſs, Mrs. Mirvan propoſed a party to Ranelagh. Madame Duval joyfully conſented

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to it, and the Captain, though he railed againſt the diſſipation of the women, did not oppoſe it, and therefore Maria and I ran up ſtairs to dreſs ourſelves.

Before we were ready, word was brought us, that Sir Clement Willoughby was in the drawing-room. He introduced himſelf under the pretence of enquiring after all our healths, and entered the room with the eaſy air of an old acquaintance; though Mrs. Mirvan confeſſes that he ſeemed embarraſſed, when he found how coldly he was received, not only by the Captain, but by herſelf.

I was extremely diſconcerted at the thoughts of ſeeing this man again, and did not go down ſtairs till I was called to tea. He was then deeply engaged in a diſcourſe upon French manners with Madame Duval and the Captain, and the ſubject ſeemed ſo entirely to engroſs him, that he did not, at firſt, obſerve my entrance into the room. Their converſation was ſupported with great vehemence; the Captain roughly maintaining the ſuperiority of the Engliſh in every particular, and Madame Duval warmly refuſing to allow of it in any; while Sir Clement exerted all his powers of argument and of ridicule to ſecond and ſtrengthen whatever was advanced by the Captain: for he had the ſagacity to diſcover, that he could

could take no method ſo effectual for making the maſter of the houſe his friend, as to make Madame Duval his enemy: and indeed, in a very ſhort time, he had reaſon to congratulate himſelf upon his ſucceſsful diſcernment.

As ſoon as he ſaw me, he made a moſt reſpectful bow, and hoped I had not ſuffered from the fatigue of the ridotto: I made no other anſwer than a ſlight inclination of the head, for I was very much aſhamed of that whole affair. He then returned to the diſputants, where he managed the argument ſo ſkilfully, at once provoking Madame Duval, and delighting the Captain, that I could not forbear admiring his addreſs, though I condemned his ſubtlety. Mrs. Mirvan, dreading ſuch violent antagoniſts, attempted frequently to change the ſubject; and ſhe might have ſucceeded, but for the interpoſition of Sir Clement, who would not ſuffer it to be given up, and ſupported it with ſuch humour and ſatire, that he ſeems to have won the Captain's heart; though their united forces ſo enraged and overpowered Madame Duval, that ſhe really trembled with paſſion.

I was very glad when Mrs. Mirvan ſaid it was time to be gone. Sir Clement aroſe to take leave; but the Captain very cordially invited him to join our party: he *had*

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an engagement, he ſaid, but would give it up to have that pleaſure.

Some little confuſion enſued in regard to our manner of ſetting off: Mrs. Mirvan offered Madame Duval a place in her coach, and propoſed that we four females ſhould go all together: however, this ſhe rejected, declaring ſhe would by no means go ſo far without a gentleman, and wondering ſo polite a lady could make *ſo Engliſh* a propoſal. Sir Clement Willoughby ſaid his chariot was waiting at the door, and begged to know if it could be of any uſe. It was, at laſt, decided, that a hackney-coach ſhould be called for Monſieur Du Bois and Madame Duval, in which the Captain, and, at his requeſt, Sir Clement, went alſo; Mrs. and Miſs Mirvan and I had a peaceful and comfortable ride by ourſelves.

I doubt not but they quarrelled all the way; for when we met at Ranelagh, every one ſeemed out of humour: and, though we joined parties, poor Madame Duval was avoided as much as poſſible by all but me.

The room was ſo very much crowded, that, but for the uncommon aſſiduity of Sir Clement Willoughby, we ſhould not have been able to procure a box (which is the name

name given to the arched receſſes that are appropriated for tea-parties) till half the company had retired. As we were taking poſſeſſion of our places, ſome ladies of Mrs. Mirvan's acquaintance ſtopped to ſpeak to her, and perſuaded her to *take a round* with them. When ſhe returned to us, what was my ſurpriſe, to ſee that Lord Orville had joined her party! The ladies walked on; Mrs. Mirvan ſeated herſelf, and made a ſlight, though reſpectful, invitation to Lord Orville to drink his tea with us, which, to my no ſmall conſternation, he accepted.

I felt a confuſion unſpeakable at again ſeeing him, from the recollection of the ridotto adventure: nor did my ſituation leſſen it, for I was ſeated between Madame Duval and Sir Clement, who ſeemed as little as myſelf to deſire Lord Orville's preſence. Indeed, the continual wrangling and ill-breeding of Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval, made me bluſh that I belonged to them. And poor Mrs Mirvan and her amiable daughter had ſtill leſs reaſon to be ſatisfied.

A general ſilence enſued after he was ſeated: his appearance, from different motives, gave a univerſal reſtraint to every body. What his own reaſons were for honouring

nouring us with his company, I cannot imagine, unleſs, indeed, he had a curioſity to know whether I ſhould invent any new impertinence concerning him.

The firſt ſpeech was made by Madame Duval, who ſaid, "It's quite a ſhocking thing to ſee ladies come to ſo genteel a place as Ranelagh with hats on; it has a monſtrous vulgar look: I can't think what they wear them for. There's no ſuch a thing to be ſeen in Paris."

"Indeed," cried Sir Clement, "I muſt own myſelf no advocate for hats; I am ſorry the ladies ever invented or adopted ſo tantalizing a faſhion; for, where there is beauty, they only ſerve to ſhade it, and where there is none, to excite a moſt unavailing curioſity. I fancy they were originally worn by ſome young and whimſical coquet."

"More likely," anſwered the Captain, "they were invented by ſome wrinkled old hag, who'd a mind for to keep the young fellows in chace, let them be never ſo weary."

"I don't know what you may do in England," cried Madame Duval, "but I know in Paris no woman need n't be at ſuch a trouble as that, to be taken very genteel notice of."

"Why, will you pretend for to ſay," returned the Captain, "that they don't diſtinguiſh

tinguiſh the old from the young there as well as here?"

"They don't make no diſtinguiſhments at all," ſaid ſhe; "they're vaſtly too polite."

"More fools they!" cried the Captain, ſneeringly.

"Would to Heaven," cried Sir Clement, "that, for our own ſakes, we Engliſhmen too were bleſt with ſo accommodating a blindneſs!"

"Why the devil do you make ſuch a prayer as that?" demanded the Captain: "them are the firſt fooliſh words I've heard you ſpeak; but I ſuppoſe you're not much uſed to that ſort of work. Did you ever make a prayer before, ſince you were a ſniveler?"

"Ay, now," cried Madame Duval, "that's another of the unpoliteneſſes of you Engliſh, to go to talking of ſuch things as that: now in Paris, nobody never ſays nothing about religion, no more than about politics."

"Why then," anſwered he, "it's a ſign they take no more care of their ſouls than of their country, and ſo both one and t'other go to old Nick."

"Well, if they do," ſaid ſhe, "who's the worſe, ſo long as they don't ſay nothing about it? it's the tireſomeſt thing in the

world to be always talking of them ſort of things, and nobody that's ever been abroad troubles their heads about them."

"Pray then," cried the Captain, "ſince you know ſo much of the matter, be ſo good as to tell us what they *do* trouble their heads about? — hay, Sir Clement! ha'n't we a right to know that much?"

"A very comprehenſive queſtion," ſaid Sir Clement, "and I expect much inſtruction from the lady's anſwer."

"Come, Madam," continued the Captain, "never flinch; ſpeak at once; don't ſtop for thinking."

"I aſſure you I am not going," anſwered ſhe; "for as to what they *do* do, why they've enough to do, I promiſe you, what with one thing or another."

"But *what*, *what* do they do, theſe famous *Monſeers?*" demanded the Captain; "can't you tell us? do they game?—or drink?—or fiddle?—or are they jockies?—or do they ſpend all their time in flummering old women?"

"As to that, Sir,—but indeed I ſhan't trouble myſelf to anſwer ſuch a parcel of low queſtions, ſo don't aſk me no more about it." And then, to my great vexation, turning to Lord Orville, ſhe ſaid, "Pray, Sir, was you ever in Paris?"

He only bowed.

"And

"And pray, Sir, how did you like it?"

This *comprehenſive* queſtion, as Sir Clement would have called it, though it made him ſmile, alſo made him heſitate; however, his anſwer was expreſſive of his approbation.

"I thought you would like it, Sir, becauſe you look ſo like a gentleman. As to the Captain, and as to that other gentleman, why they may very well not like what they don't know; for I ſuppoſe, Sir, you was never abroad?"

"Only three years, Ma'am," anſwered Sir Clement, drily.

"Well, that's very ſurpriſing! I ſhould never have thought it: however, I dare ſay you only kept company with the Engliſh."

"Why pray, who *ſhould* he keep company with?" cried the Captain: "what, I ſuppoſe you'd have him aſhamed of his own nation, like ſome other people not a thouſand miles off, on purpoſe to make his own nation aſhamed of him?"

"I'm ſure it wou'd be a very good thing if you'd go abroad yourſelf."

"How will you make out that, hay, Madam? come, pleaſe to tell me, where wou'd be the good of that?"

"Where! why a great deal. They'd make quite another perſon of you."

"What, I ſuppoſe you'd have me learn

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to cut capers?—and dreſs like a monkey?—and palaver in French gibberiſh?—hay, would you?—And powder, and daub, and make myſelf up, like ſome other folks?"

"I would have you learn to be more politer, Sir, and not to talk to ladies in ſuch a rude, old-faſhion way as this. You, Sir, as have been in Paris" (again addreſſing herſelf to Lord Orville) "can tell this Engliſh gentleman how he'd be deſpiſed, if he was to talk in ſuch an ungenteel manner as this, before any foreigners. Why there is n't a hair-dreſſer, nor a ſhoe-maker, nor nobody, that would n't bluſh to be in your company."

"Why look ye, Madam," anſwered the Captain, "as to your hair-pinchers and ſhoe-blacks, you may puff off their manners, and welcome; and I am heartily glad you like 'em ſo well; but as to me, ſince you muſt needs make ſo free of your advice, I muſt e'en tell you, I never kept company with any ſuch gentry."

"Come, ladies and gentlemen," ſaid Mrs. Mirvan, "as many of you as have done tea, I invite to walk with me." Maria and I ſtarted up inſtantly; Lord Orville followed; and I queſtion whether we were not half round the room ere the angry diſputants knew that we had left the box.

As the huſband of Mrs. Mirvan had

borne ſo large a ſhare in this diſagreeable altercation, Lord Orville forbore to make any comments upon it; ſo that the ſubject was immediately dropt, and the converſation became calmly ſociable, and politely chearful, and, to every body but me, muſt have been highly agreeable:—but, as to myſelf, I was ſo eagerly deſirous of making ſome apology to Lord Orville for the impertinence of which he muſt have thought me guilty at the ridotto, and yet ſo utterly unable to aſſume ſufficient courage to ſpeak to him concerning an affair in which I had ſo terribly expoſed myſelf, that I hardly ventured to ſay a word all the time we were walking. Beſides, the knowledge of his contemptuous opinion, haunted and diſpirited me, and made me fear he might poſſibly miſconſtrue whatever I ſhould ſay. So that, far from enjoying a converſation which might, at any other time, have delighted me, I continued ſilent, uncomfortable, and aſhamed. O Sir, ſhall I ever again involve myſelf in ſo fooliſh an embarraſſment? I am ſure, that if I do, I ſhall deſerve yet greater mortification.

We were not joined by the reſt of the party till we had taken three or four turns round the room, and then they were ſo quarrelſome, that Mrs. Mirvan complained of being fatigued, and propoſed going

home. No one diſſented. Lord Orville joined another party, having firſt made an offer of his ſervices, which the gentlemen declined, and we proceeded to an outward room, where we waited for the carriages. It was ſettled that we ſhould return to town in the ſame manner we came to Ranelagh, and, accordingly, Monſieur Du Bois handed Madame Duval into a hackney-coach, and was juſt preparing to follow her, when ſhe ſcreamed, and jumpt haſtily out, declaring ſhe was wet through all her clothes. Indeed, upon examination, the coach was found to be in a diſmal condition; for the weather proved very bad, and the rain had, though I know not how, made its way into the carriage.

Mrs. and Miſs Mirvan, and myſelf, were already diſpoſed of as before; but no ſooner did the Captain hear this account, than, without any ceremony, he was ſo civil as to immediately take poſſeſſion of the vacant ſeat in his own coach, leaving Madame Duval and Monſieur Du Bois to take care of themſelves. As to Sir Clement Willoughby, his own chariot was in waiting.

I inſtantly begged permiſſion to offer Madame Duval my own place, and made a motion to get out; but Mrs. Mirvan ſtopped me, ſaying that I ſhould then be ob-

liged to return to town with only the foreigner, or Sir Clement.

"O never mind the old Beldame," cried the Captain, "she's weather-proof, I'll answer for her; and besides, as we are all, I hope, *English*, why she'll meet with no worse than she expects from us."

"I do not mean to defend her," said Mrs. Mirvan; "but indeed, as she belongs to our party, we cannot, with any decency, leave the place, till she is, by some means, accommodated."

"Lord, my dear," cried the Captain, whom the distress of Madame Duval had put into very good humour, "why she'll break her heart, if she meets with any civility from a filthy Englishman."

Mrs. Mirvan, however, prevailed, and we all got out of the coach, to wait till Madame Duval could meet with some better carriage. We found her, attended by Monsieur Du Bois, standing amongst the servants, and very busy in wiping her negligee, and endeavouring to save it from being stained by the wet, as she said it was a new Lyons silk. Sir Clement Willoughby offered her the use of his chariot, but she had been too much piqued by his raillery to accept it. We waited some time, but in vain, for no hackney-coach could be procured. The Captain, at last, was persuaded

ſuaded to accompany Sir Clement himſelf, and we four females were handed into Mrs. Mirvan's carriage, though not before Madame Duval had inſiſted upon our making room for Monſieur Du Bois, to which the Captain only conſented in preference to being incommoded by him in Sir Clement's chariot.

Our party drove off firſt. We were ſilent and unſociable; for the difficulties attending this arrangement had made every one languid and fatigued. Unſociable, I muſt own, we continued; but very ſhort was the duration of our ſilence, as we had not proceeded thirty yards, before every voice was heard at once,—for the coach broke down! I ſuppoſe we concluded of courſe, that we were all half killed, by the violent ſhrieks that ſeemed to come from every mouth. The chariot was ſtopped, the ſervants came to our aſſiſtance, and we were taken out of the carriage, without having been at all hurt. The night was dark and wet; but I had ſcarce touched the ground, when I was lifted ſuddenly from it, by Sir Clement Willoughby, who begged permiſſion to aſſiſt me, though he did not wait to have it granted, but carried me in his arms back to Ranelagh.

He enquired very earneſtly if I was not hurt by the accident? I aſſured him I was

perfectly safe, and free from injury, and desired he would leave me, and return to the reſt of the party, for I was very uneaſy to know whether they had been equally fortunate. He told me he was happy in being honoured with my commands, and would joyfully execute them; but inſiſted upon firſt conducting me to a warm room, as I had not wholly eſcaped being wet. He did not regard my objections, but made me follow him to an apartment, where we found an excellent fire, and ſome company waiting for carriages. I readily accepted a ſeat, and then begged he would go.

And go, indeed, he did; but he returned in a moment, telling me that the rain was more violent than ever, and that he had ſent his ſervants to offer their aſſiſtance, and acquaint *the Mirvans* of my ſituation. I was very mad that he would not go himſelf; but as my acquaintance with him was ſo very ſlight, I did not think proper to urge him contrary to his inclination.

Well, he drew a chair cloſe to mine, and, after again enquiring how I did, ſaid, in a low voice, "You will pardon me, Miſs Anville, if the eagerneſs I feel to vindicate myſelf, induces me to ſnatch this opportunity of making ſincere acknowledgments for the impertinence with which I tormented you at the laſt ridotto. I can aſſure you,

Madam,

Madam, I have been a true and ſorrowful penitent ever ſince; but—ſhall I tell you honeſtly what encouraged me to——"

He ſtopt; but I ſaid nothing, for I thought inſtantly of the converſation Miſs Mirvan had overheard, and ſuppoſed he was going to tell me himſelf what part Lord Orville had borne in it; and really I did not wiſh to hear it repeated. Indeed, the reſt of his ſpeech convinces me that ſuch was his intention; with what view, I know not, except to make a merit of his defending me.

"And yet," he continued, "my excuſe may only expoſe my own credulity, and want of judgment and penetration. I will, therefore, merely beſeech your pardon, and hope that ſome future time——"

Juſt then the door was opened by Sir Clement's ſervant, and I had the pleaſure of ſeeing the Captain, Mrs. and Miſs Mirvan, enter the room.

"O ho," cried the former, "you have got a good warm birth here; but we ſhall beat up your quarters. Here, Lucy, Moll, come to the fire, and dry your trumpery. But, hey-day,—why where's old Madam French?"

"Good God," cried I, "is not Madame Duval then with you?"

"With me! No,—thank God."

I was very uneaſy to know what might have become of her, and, if they would have ſuffered me, I ſhould have gone out in ſearch of her myſelf; but all the ſervants were diſpatched to find her, and the Captain ſaid we might be very ſure her *French beau* would take care of her.

We waited ſome time without any tidings, and were ſoon the only party in the room. My uneaſineſs increaſed ſo much, that Sir Clement now made a voluntary offer of ſeeking her. However, the ſame moment that he opened the door with this deſign, ſhe preſented herſelf at it, attended by Monſieur Du Bois.

"I was this inſtant, Madam," ſaid he, "coming to ſee for you."

"You are mighty good, truly," cried ſhe, "to come when all the miſchief's over."

She then entered,—in ſuch a condition!—entirely covered with mud, and in ſo great a rage, it was with difficulty ſhe could ſpeak. We all expreſſed our concern, and offered our aſſiſtance,—except the Captain; who no ſooner beheld her, than he burſt into a loud laugh.

We endeavoured, by our enquiries and condolements, to prevent her attending to him; and ſhe was, for ſome time, ſo wholly engroſſed by her anger and her diſtreſs, that we

we ſucceeded without much trouble. We begged her to inform us how this accident had happened. "How!" repeated ſhe,—"why it was all along of your all going away,—and there poor Monſieur Du Bois—but it was n't his fault,—for he's as bad off as me."

All eyes were then turned to Monſieur Du Bois, whoſe clothes were in the ſame miſerable plight with thoſe of Madame Duval, and who, wet, ſhivering, and diſconſolate, had crept to the fire.

The Captain laughed yet more heartily; while Mrs. Mirvan, aſhamed of his rudeneſs, repeated her enquiries to Madame Duval, who, anſwered, "Why, as we were a-coming along, all in the rain, Monſieur Du Bois was ſo obliging, though I'm ſure it was an unlucky obligingneſs for me, as to lift me up in his arms, to carry me over a place that was ancle-deep in mud; but inſtead of my being ever the better for it, juſt as we were in the worſt part,—I'm ſure I wiſh we had been fifty miles off,—for, ſomehow or other, his foot ſlipt,—at leaſt, I ſuppoſe ſo,—though I can't think how it happened, for I'm no ſuch great weight,—but, however that was, down we both came together, all in the mud; and the more we tried to get up, the more deeper we got covered with the naſtineſs—and my new

Lyons negligee, too, quite ſpoilt!—however, it's well we got up at all, for we might have laid there till now, for aught you all cared; for nobody never came near us."

This recital put the Captain into an extacy; he went from the lady to the gentleman, and from the gentleman to the lady, to enjoy alternately the ſight of their diſtreſs. He really ſhouted with pleaſure; and, ſhaking Monſieur Du Bois ſtrenuouſly by the hand, wiſhed him joy of having *touched Engliſh Ground*; and then he held a candle to Madame Duval, that he might have a more complete view of her diſaſter, declaring repeatedly, that he had never been better pleaſed in his life.

The rage of poor Madame Duval was unſpeakable; ſhe daſhed the candle out of his hand, ſtamped upon the floor, and, at laſt, ſpit in his face.

This action ſeemed immediately to calm them both, as the joy of the Captain was converted into reſentment, and the wrath of Madame Duval into fear; for he put his hands upon her ſhoulders, and gave her ſo violent a ſhake, that ſhe ſcreamed out for help; aſſuring her, at the ſame time, that if ſhe had been one ounce leſs old, or leſs ugly, ſhe ſhould have had it all returned on her own face.

Monſieur

Monſieur Du Bois, who had ſeated himſelf very quietly at the fire, approached them, and expoſtulated very warmly with the Captain; but he was neither underſtood nor regarded, and Madame Duval was not releaſed, till ſhe quite ſobbed with paſſion.

When they were parted, I entreated her to permit the woman who has the charge of the ladies cloaks to aſſiſt in drying her clothes; ſhe conſented, and we did what was poſſible to ſave her from catching cold. We were obliged to wait in this diſagreeable ſituation near an hour, before a hackney-coach could be found; and then we were diſpoſed in the ſame manner as before our accident.

I am going this morning to ſee poor Madame Duval, and to enquire after her health, which I think muſt have ſuffered by her laſt night's misfortunes; though, indeed, ſhe ſeems to be naturally ſtrong and hearty.

Adieu, my dear Sir, till to-morrow.

LETTER XVII.

Evelina in continuation.

Friday Morning, April 15.

SIR Clement Willoughby called here yeſterday at noon, and Captain Mirvan invited him to dinner. For my part, I ſpent the day in a manner the moſt uncomfortable imaginable.

I found Madame Duval at breakfaſt in bed, though Monſieur Du Bois was in the chamber; which ſo much aſtoniſhed me, that I was, involuntarily, retiring, without conſidering how odd an appearance my retreat would have, when Madame Duval called me back, and laughed very heartily at my ignorance of foreign cuſtoms.

The converſation, however, very ſoon took a more ſerious turn; for ſhe began, with great bitterneſs, to inveigh againſt the *barbarous brutality of that fellow the Captain*, and the horrible ill-breeding of the Engliſh in general, declaring ſhe ſhould make her eſcape with all expedition from ſo *beaſtly a nation*. But nothing can be more ſtrangely abſurd, than to hear politeneſs recommended in language ſo repugnant to it as that of Madam Duval.

She lamented, very mournfully, the fate of her

her Lyons ſilk, and proteſted ſhe had rather have parted with all the reſt of her wardrobe, becauſe it was the firſt gown ſhe had bought to wear upon leaving off her weeds. She has a very bad cold, and Monſieur Du Bois is ſo hoarſe, he can hardly ſpeak.

She inſiſted upon my ſtaying with her all day, as ſhe intended, ſhe ſaid, to introduce me to ſome of my own relations. I would very fain have excuſed myſelf, but ſhe did not allow me any choice.

Till the arrival of theſe relations, one continued ſeries of queſtions on her ſide, and of anſwers on mine, filled up all the time we paſſed together. Her curioſity was inſatiable; ſhe enquired into every action of my life, and every particular that had fallen under my obſervation, in the lives of all I knew. Again, ſhe was ſo cruel as to avow the moſt inveterate rancour againſt the ſole benefactor her deſerted child and grandchild have met with; and ſuch was the indignation her ingratitude raiſed, that I would actually have quitted her preſence and houſe, had ſhe not, in a manner the moſt peremptory, abſolutely forbid me. But what, good Heaven! can induce her to ſuch ſhocking injuſtice? O my friend and father! I have no command of myſelf when this ſubject is ſtarted.

She talked very much of taking me to Paris,

Paris, and ſaid I greatly wanted the poliſh of a French education. She lamented that I had been brought up in the country, which, ſhe obſerved, had given me a very *bumpkiniſh air*. However, ſhe bid me not deſpair, for ſhe had known many girls, much worſe than me, who had become very fine ladies after a few years reſidence abroad; and ſhe particularly inſtanced a Miſs Polly Moore, daughter of a chandler's-ſhop woman, who, by an accident not worth relating, happened to be ſent to Paris, where, from an aukward ill-bred girl, ſhe ſo much improved, that ſhe has ſince been taken for a woman of quality.

The relations to whom ſhe was pleaſed to introduce me, conſiſted of a Mr. Branghton, who is her nephew, and three of his children, the eldeſt of which is a ſon, and the two younger are daughters.

Mr. Branghton appears about forty years of age. He does not ſeem to want a common underſtanding, though he is very contracted and prejudiced: he has ſpent his whole time in the city, and I believe feels a great contempt for all who reſide elſewhere.

His ſon ſeems weaker in his underſtanding, and more gay in his temper; but his gaiety is that of a fooliſh, over-grown ſchool-boy, whoſe mirth conſiſts in noiſe and diſturbance. He diſdains his father for his cloſe

close attention to business, and love of money, though he seems himself to have no talents, spirit, or generosity, to make him superior to either. His chief delight appears to be tormenting and ridiculing his sisters, who, in return, most heartily despise him.

Miss Branghton, the eldest daughter, is by no means ugly, but looks proud, ill-tempered, and conceited. She hates the city, though without knowing why; for it is easy to discover she has lived no where else.

Miss Polly Branghton is rather pretty, very foolish, very ignorant, very giddy, and, I believe, very good-natured.

The first half hour was allotted to *making themselves comfortable*, for they complained of having had a very dirty walk, as they came on foot from Snow-Hill, where Mr. Branghton keeps a silver-smith's shop; and the young ladies had not only their coats to brush, and shoes to dry, but to adjust their head-dress, which their bonnets had totally discomposed.

The manner in which Madame Duval was pleased to introduce me to this family, extremely shocked me. "Here, my dears," said she, "here's a relation you little thought of: but you must know my poor daughter Caroline had this child after she run away from me,—though I never knew nothing

nothing of it, not I, for a long while after; for they took care to keep it a ſecret from me, though the poor child has never a friend in the world beſides."

"Miſs ſeems very tender-hearted, aunt," ſaid Miſs Polly, "and to be ſure ſhe's not to blame for her mama's undutifulneſs, for ſhe could n't help it."

"Lord, no," anſwered ſhe, "and I never took no notice of it to her; for indeed, as to that, my own poor daughter was n't ſo much to blame as you may think, for ſhe'd never have gone aſtray, if it had not been for that meddling old parſon I told you of."

"If aunt pleaſes," ſaid young Mr. Branghton, "we'll talk o' ſomewhat elſe, for Miſs looks very uneaſy-like."

The next ſubject that was choſen, was the age of the three young Branghtons and myſelf. The ſon is twenty; the daughters, upon hearing that I was ſeventeen, ſaid that was juſt the age of Miſs Polly; but their brother, after a long diſpute, proved that ſhe was two years older, to the great anger of both ſiſters, who agreed that he was very ill-natured and ſpiteful.

When this point was ſettled, the queſtion was put, Which was talleſt?—We were deſired to meaſure, as the Branghtons were all of different opinions. None of them,

them, however, diſputed my being the talleſt in the company, but, in regard to one another they were extremely quarrelſome: the brother inſiſted upon their meaſuring *fair*, and not with *heads* and *heels*; but they would by no means conſent to loſe thoſe privileges of our ſex, and therefore the young man was *caſt*, as ſhorteſt; though he appealed to all preſent upon the injuſtice of the decree.

This ceremony over, the young ladies began, very freely, to examine my dreſs, and to interrogate me concerning it. "This apron's your own work, I ſuppoſe, Miſs? but theſe ſprigs a'nt in faſhion now. Pray, if it is not impertinent, what might you give a yard for this luteſtring?—Do you make your own caps, Miſs?—" and many other queſtions equally intereſting and well-bred.

They then aſked me *how I liked London?* and whether I ſhould not think the country a very *dull place*, when I returned thither? "Miſs muſt try if ſhe can't get a good huſband," ſaid Mr. Branghton, "and then ſhe may ſtay and live here."

The next topic was public places, or rather the theatres, for they knew of no other; and the merits and defects of all the actors and actreſſes were diſcuſſed: the young man here took the lead, and ſeemed to be very converſant on the ſubject. But during

during this time, what was my concern, and, ſuffer me to add, my indignation, when I found, by ſome words I occaſionally heard, that Madame Duval was entertaining Mr. Branghton with all the moſt ſecret and cruel particulars of my ſituation! The eldeſt daughter was ſoon drawn to them by the recital; the youngeſt and the ſon ſtill kept their places, intending, I believe, to divert me, though the converſation was all their own.

In a few minutes, Miſs Branghton, coming ſuddenly up to her ſiſter, exclaimed, "Lord, Polly, only think! Miſs never ſaw her papa!"

"Lord, how odd!" cried the other; "why then, Miſs, I ſuppoſe you would n't know him?"

This was quite too much for me; I roſe haſtily, and ran out of the room: but I ſoon regretted I had ſo little command of myſelf, for the two ſiſters both followed, and inſiſted upon comforting me, notwithſtanding my earneſt entreaties to be left alone.

As ſoon as I returned to the company, Madame Duval ſaid, "Why, my dear, what was the matter with you? why did you run away ſo?"

This queſtion almoſt made me run again, for I knew not how to anſwer it.

But,

But, is it not very extraordinary, that ſhe can put me in ſituations ſo ſhocking, and then wonder to find me ſenſible of any concern?

Mr. Branghton junior now enquired of me, whether I had ſeen the Tower, or St. Paul's church? and upon my anſwering in the negative, they propoſed making a party to ſhew them to me. Among other queſtions, they alſo aſked if I had ever ſeen *ſuch a thing as an Opera?* I told them I had. "Well," ſaid Mr. Branghton, "I never ſaw one in my life, ſo long as I've lived in London, and I never deſire to ſee one, if I live here as much longer."

"Lord, Papa," cried Miſs Polly, "why not? you might as well for once, for the curioſity of the thing: beſides, Miſs Pomfret ſaw one, and ſhe ſays it was very pretty."

"Miſs will think us very vulgar," ſaid Miſs Branghton, "to live in London, and never have been to an Opera; but it's no fault of mine, I aſſure you, Miſs, only Papa don't like to go."

The reſult was, that a party was propoſed, and agreed to, for ſome early opportunity. I did not dare contradict them; but I ſaid that my time, while I remained in town, was at the diſpoſal of Mrs. Mirvan.

However,

However, I am ſure I will not attend them, if I can poſſibly avoid ſo doing.

When we parted, Madame Duval deſired to ſee me the next day; and the Branghtons told me, that the firſt time I went towards Snow-Hill, they ſhould be very glad if I would call upon them.

I wiſh we may not meet again till that time arrives.

I am ſure I ſhall not be very ambitious of being known to any more of my relations, if they have any reſemblance to thoſe whoſe acquaintance I have been introduced to already.

LETTER XVIII.

Eveline in continuation.

I Had juſt finiſhed my letter to you this morning, when a violent rapping at the door made me run down ſtairs; and who ſhould I ſee in the drawing-room, but—Lord Orville!

He was quite alone, for the family had not aſſembled to breakfaſt. He enquired, firſt of mine, then of the health of Mrs. and

and Miſs Mirvan, with a degree of concern that rather ſurpriſed me, till he ſaid that he had juſt been informed of the accident we had met with at Ranelagh. He expreſſed his ſorrow upon the occaſion with the utmoſt politeneſs, and lamented that he had not been ſo fortunate as to hear of it in time to offer his ſervices. "But, I think," he added, "Sir Clement Willoughby had the honour of aſſiſting you?"

"He was with Captain Mirvan, my Lord."

"I had heard of his being of your party."

I hope that flighty man has not been telling Lord Orville he only aſſiſted *me!* however, he did not purſue the ſubject, but ſaid, "This accident, though extremely unfortunate, will not, I hope, be the means of frightening you from gracing Ranelagh with your preſence in future?"

"Our time, my Lord, for London, is almoſt expired already."

"Indeed! do you leave town ſo very ſoon?"

"O yes, my Lord, our ſtay has already exceeded our intentions."

"Are you, then, ſo particularly partial to the country?"

"We merely came to town, my Lord, to meet Captain Mirvan."

"And does Miſs Anville feel no concern at the idea of the many mourners her abſence will occaſion?"

"O, my Lord,—I'm ſure you don't think—" I ſtopt there, for, indeed, I hardly knew what I was going to ſay. My fooliſh embarraſſment, I ſuppoſe was the cauſe of what followed;—for he came to me, and took my hand, ſaying, "I *do* think, that whoever has once ſeen Miſs Anville, muſt receive an impreſſion never to be forgotten."

This compliment,—from Lord Orville,—ſo ſurpriſed me, that I could not ſpeak; but felt myſelf change colour, and ſtood, for ſome moments, ſilent, and looking down: however, the inſtant I recollected my ſituation, I withdrew my hand, and told him that I would ſee if Mrs. Mirvan was not dreſſed. He did not oppoſe me, ſo away I went.

I met them all on the ſtairs, and returned with them to breakfaſt.

I have ſince been extremely angry with myſelf for neglecting ſo excellent an opportunity of apologizing for my behaviour at the ridotto: but, to own the truth, that affair never once occurred to me during the ſhort *tête-à-tête* which we had together. But, if ever we ſhould happen to be ſo ſituated again, I will certainly mention it; for

for I am inexpreſſibly concerned at the thought of his harbouring an opinion that I am bold or impertinent, and I could almoſt kill myſelf for having given him the ſhadow of a reaſon for ſo ſhocking an idea.

But was it not very odd that he ſhould make me ſuch a compliment? I expected it not from him;—but gallantry, I believe, is common to all men, whatever other qualities they may have in particular.

Our breakfaſt was the moſt agreeable meal, if it may be called a *meal*, that we have had ſince we came to town. Indeed, but for Madame Duval I ſhould like London extremely.

The converſation of Lord Orville is really delightful. His manners are ſo elegant, ſo gentle, ſo unaſſuming, that they at once engage eſteem, and diffuſe complacence. Far from being indolently ſatisfied with his own accompliſhments, as I have already obſerved many men here are, though without any pretenſions to his merit, he is moſt aſſiduouſly attentive to pleaſe and to ſerve all who are in his company; and, though his ſucceſs is invariable, he never manifeſts the ſmalleſt degree of conſciouſneſs.

I could wiſh that *you*, my deareſt Sir, knew Lord Orville, becauſe I am ſure you would love him; and I have felt that wiſh for

for no other perſon I have ſeen ſince I came to London. I ſometimes imagine, that, when his youth is flown, his vivacity abated, and his life is devoted to retirement, he will, perhaps, reſemble him whom I moſt love and honour. His preſent ſweetneſs, politeneſs, and diffidence, ſeem to promiſe in future the ſame benevolence, dignity, and goodneſs. But I muſt not expatiate upon this ſubject.

When Lord Orville was gone,—and he made but a very ſhort viſit,—I was preparing, moſt reluctantly, to wait upon Madame Duval; but Mrs. Mirvan propoſed to the Captain, that ſhe ſhould be invited to dinner in Queen-Ann-ſtreet, and he readily conſented, for he ſaid he wiſhed to aſk after her Lyons negligee.

The invitation is accepted, and we expect her every moment. But to me, it is very ſtrange, that a woman, who is the uncontrolled miſtreſs of her time, fortune, and actions, ſhould chuſe to expoſe herſelf voluntarily to the rudeneſs of a man who is openly determined to make her his ſport. But ſhe has very few acquaintance, and, I fancy, ſcarce knows how to employ herſelf.

How great is my obligation to Mrs. Mirvan, for beſtowing her time in a manner ſo diſagreeable to herſelf, merely to promote my happineſs! every diſpute in which her undeſerving

undeſerving huſband engages, is productive of pain, and uneaſineſs to herſelf; of this I am ſo ſenſible, that I even beſought her not to ſend to Madame Duval, but ſhe declared ſhe could not bear to have me paſs all my time, while in town, with her only. Indeed ſhe could not be more kind to me, were ſhe your daughter.

LETTER XIX.

Evelina in continuation.

Saturday Morning, April 16.

MADAME Duval was accompanied by Monſieur Du Bois. I am ſurpriſed that ſhe ſhould chuſe to introduce him where he is ſo unwelcome; and, indeed, it is ſtrange that they ſhould be ſo conſtantly together: though I believe I ſhould not have taken notice of it, but that Captain Mirvan is perpetually rallying me upon my *grand-mama's beau.*

They were both received by Mrs. Mirvan with her uſual good-breeding; but the Captain, moſt provokingly, attacked her immediately, ſaying, "Now, Madam, you that have lived abroad, pleaſe to tell me this here; Which did you like beſt, the *warm*

room at Ranelagh, or the *cold bath* you went into afterwards? though, I aſſure you, you look ſo well that I ſhould adviſe you to take another dip."

"*Ma foi*, Sir," cried ſhe, "nobody aſked for your advice, ſo you may as well keep it to yourſelf: beſides, it's no ſuch great joke, to be ſplaſhed, and to catch cold, and ſpoil all one's things, whatever you may think of it."

"*Splaſhed*, quoth-a!—why I thought you were ſouſed all over.—Come, come, don't mince the matter, never ſpoil a good ſtory; you know you had n't a dry thread about you — 'Fore George, I ſhall never think on't without hallowing! ſuch a poor, forlorn, draggle-tailed—*gentlewoman!* and poor *Monſieer* French, here, like a drowned rat, by your ſide!—"

"Well, the worſe pickle we was in, ſo much the worſer in you not to help us, for you knowed where we were faſt enough, becauſe, while I laid in the mud, I'm pretty ſure I heard you ſnigger; ſo it's like enough you joſtled us down yourſelf, for Monſieur Du Bois ſays, that he is ſure he had a great jolt given him, or he ſhould n't have fell."

The Captain laughed ſo immoderately, that he really gave me alſo a ſuſpicion that he was not entirely innocent of the charge: however, he diſclaimed it very peremptorily.

"Why

"Why then," continued ſhe, "if you did n't do that, why did n't you come to help us?"

"Who, I?—what, do you ſuppoſe I had forgot I was an *Engliſhman*, a filthy, beaſtly *Engliſhman*?"

"Very well, Sir, very well; but I was a fool to expect any better, for it's all of a piece with the reſt; you know you wanted to fling me out of the coach-window, the very firſt time ever I ſee you: but I'll never go to Ranelagh with you no more, that I'm reſolved; for I dare ſay, if the horſes had runn'd over me, as I laid in that naſtineſs, you'd never have ſtirred a ſtep to ſave me."

"Lord, no, to be ſure, Ma'am, not for the world! I know your opinion of our nation too well, to affront you by ſuppoſing a *Frenchman* would want *my* aſſiſtance to protect you. Did you think that *Monſieur* here, and I, had changed characters, and that he ſhould pop you into the mud, and I help you out of it? Ha, ha, ha!"

"O, very well, Sir, laugh on, it's like your manners; however, if poor Monſieur Du Bois had n't met with that unlucky accident himſelf, I ſhould n't have wanted nobody's help."

"O, I promiſe you, Madam, you'd never have had mine; I knew my diſtance better;

and as to your being a little ducked, or ſo, why, to be ſure, *Monſeer* and you ſettled that between yourſelves; ſo it was no buſineſs of mine."

"What, then, I ſuppoſe, you want to make me believe as Monſieur Du Bois ſerved me that trick o' purpoſe?"

"O' purpoſe! ay, certainly, who ever doubted that? Do you think a *Frenchman* ever made a blunder? If he had been ſome clumſy-footed *Engliſh* fellow, indeed, it might have been accidental: but what the devil ſignifies all your hopping and capering with your dancing-maſters, if you can't balance yourſelves upright?"

In the midſt of this dialogue, Sir Clement Willoughby made his appearance. He affects to enter the houſe with the freedom of an old acquaintance, and this very *eaſineſs*, which, to me, is aſtoniſhing, is what moſt particularly recommends him to the Captain. Indeed, he ſeems very ſucceſsfully to ſtudy all the humours of that gentleman.

After having heartily welcomed him, "You are juſt come in time, my boy," ſaid he, "to ſettle a little matter of a diſpute between this here gentlewoman and I; do you know, ſhe has been trying to perſuade me, that ſhe did not above half like the ducking *Monſeer* gave her t'other night."

"I ſhould

"I ſhould have hoped," (ſaid Sir Clement, with the utmoſt gravity) "that the friendſhip ſubſiſting between that lady and gentleman, would have guarded them againſt any actions profeſſedly diſagreeable to each other; but, probably, they might not have diſcuſſed the matter previouſly; in which caſe, the gentleman, I muſt own, ſeems to have been guilty of inattention, ſince, in my humble opinion, it was his buſineſs firſt to have enquired whether the lady preferred ſoft, or hard ground, before he dropt her."

"O very fine, Gentlemen, very fine," cried Madame Duval, "you may try to ſet us together by the ears as much as you will; but I'm not ſuch an ignorant perſon as to be made a fool of ſo eaſily; ſo you need n't talk no more about it, for I ſees into your deſigns."

Monſieur Du Bois, who was juſt able to diſcover the ſubject upon which the converſation turned, made his defence, in French, with great ſolemnity: he hoped, he ſaid, that the company would at leaſt acknowledge, he did not come from a nation of brutes, and conſequently, that to wilfully offend any lady, was, to him, utterly impoſſible; but that, on the contrary, in endeavouring, as was his duty, to ſave and guard her, he had himſelf ſuffered, in a

manner which he would forbear to relate, but which, he greatly apprehended, he ſhould feel the ill effects of for many months; and then, with a countenance exceedingly lengthened, he added, that he hoped it would not be attributed to him as national prejudice, when he owned that he muſt, to the beſt of his memory, aver, that his unfortunate fall was owing to a ſudden, but violent puſh, which, he was ſhocked to ſay, ſome malevolent perſon, with a deſign to his injury, muſt certainly have given him; but whether with a view to mortify him, by making him let the lady fall, or whether merely to ſpoil his clothes, he could not pretend to determine.

This diſputation was, at laſt, concluded by Mrs. Mirvan's propoſing that we ſhould all go to Cox's Muſeum. Nobody objected, and carriages were immediately ordered.

In our way down ſtairs, Madame Duval, in a very paſſionate manner, ſaid, "*Ma foi*, if I would n't give fifty guineas only to know who gave us that ſhove!"

This Muſeum is very aſtoniſhing, and very ſuperb; yet, it afforded me but little pleaſure, for it is a mere ſhow, though a wonderful one.

Sir Clement Willoughby, in our walk round the room, aſked me what my opinion was of this brilliant *ſpectacle*?

"It

"It is very fine, and very ingenious," anſwered I, "and yet—I don't know how it is,—but I ſeem to *miſs ſomething*."

"Excellently anſwered!" cried he, "you have exactly defined my own feelings, though in a manner I ſhould never have arrived at. But I was certain your taſte was too well formed, to be pleaſed at the expence of your underſtanding."

"*Pardi*," cried Madame Duval, "I hope you two is difficult enough! I'm ſure if you don't like this, you like nothing: for it's the grandeſt, prettieſt, fineſt ſight that ever I ſee, in England."

"What," (cried the Captain with a ſneer) "I ſuppoſe this may be in your French taſte? it's like enough, for it's all *kickſhaw* work. But, pr'ythee, friend," (turning to the perſon who explained the devices) "will you tell me the *uſe* of all this? for I'm not enough of a conjurer to find it out."

"Uſe, indeed!" (repeated Madame Duval diſdainfully) "Lord, if every thing's to be uſeful!—"

"Why, Sir, as to that, Sir," ſaid our conductor, "the ingenuity of the mechaniſm,—the beauty of the workmanſhip,—the—undoubtedly, Sir, any perſon of taſte may eaſily diſcern the utility of ſuch extraordinary performances."

"Why then, Sir," anſwered the Captain,

" your perſon of taſte muſt be either a coxcomb, or a Frenchman; though, for the matter of that, 'tis the ſame thing."

Juſt then, our attention was attracted by a pine-apple, which, ſuddenly opening, diſcovered a neſt of birds, who immediately began to ſing. " Well," cried Madame Duval, " this is prettier than all the reſt! I declare, in all my travels, I never ſee nothing eleganter."

" Hark ye, friend," ſaid the Captain, " haſt never another pine-apple?"

" Sir?—"

" Becauſe, if thou haſt, pr'ythee give it us without the birds; for, d'ye ſee, I'm no Frenchman, and ſhould reliſh ſomething more ſubſtantial."

This entertainment concluded with a concert of mechanical muſic: I cannot explain how it was produced, but the effect was pleaſing. Madame Duval was in extacies; and the Captain flung himſelf into ſo many ridiculous diſtortions, by way of mimicking her, that he engaged the attention of all the company; and, in the midſt of the performance of the Coronation Anthem, while Madame Duval was affecting to beat time, and uttering many expreſſions of delight, he called ſuddenly for ſalts, which a lady, apprehending ſome diſtreſs, politely handed to him, and which, inſtantly

applying to the noſtrils of poor Madame Duval, ſhe involuntarily ſnuffed up ſuch a quantity, that the pain and ſurpriſe made her ſcream aloud. When ſhe recovered, ſhe reproached him, with her uſual vehemence; but he proteſted he had taken that meaſure out of pure friendſhip, as he concluded, from her raptures, that ſhe was going into hyſterics. This excuſe by no means appeaſed her, and they had a violent quarrel; but the only effect her anger had on the Captain, was to encreaſe his diverſion. Indeed, he laughs and talks ſo terribly loud in public, that he frequently makes us aſhamed of belonging to him.

Madame Duval, notwithſtanding her wrath, made no ſcruple of returning to dine in Queen-Anne-ſtreet. Mrs. Mirvan had ſecured places for the play at Drury-Lane Theatre, and, though ever uneaſy in her company, ſhe very politely invited Madame Duval to be of our party; however, ſhe had a bad cold, and choſe to nurſe it. I was ſorry for her indiſpoſition, but I knew not how to be ſorry ſhe did not accompany us, for ſhe is—I muſt not ſay what, but very unlike other people.

LETTER XX.

Evelina in continuation.

OUR places were in the front row of a ſide-box. Sir Clement Willoughby, who knew our intention, was at the door of the Theatre, and handed us from the carriage.

We had not been ſeated five minutes, before Lord Orville, who we ſaw in the ſtage-box, came to us; and he honoured us with his company all the evening. Miſs Mirvan and I both rejoiced that Madame Duval was abſent, as we hoped for the enjoyment of ſome converſation, uninterrupted by her quarrels with the Captain: but I ſoon found that her preſence would have made very little alteration, for ſo far was I from daring to ſpeak, that I knew not where even to look.

The play was Love for Love, and though it is fraught with wit and entertainment, I hope I ſhall never ſee it repreſented again; for it is ſo extremely indelicate,—to uſe the ſofteſt word I can,—that Miſs Mirvan and I were perpetually out of countenance, and could neither make any obſervations ourſelves, nor venture to liſten to thoſe of others. This was the more provoking, as Lord

Lord Orville was in excellent ſpirits, and exceedingly entertaining.

When the Play was over, I flattered myſelf I ſhould be able to look about me with leſs reſtraint, as we intended to ſtay the Farce; but the curtain had hardly dropped, when the box-door opened, and in came Mr. Lovel, the man by whoſe foppery and impertinence I was ſo much teized at the ball where I firſt ſaw Lord Orville.

I turned away my head, and began talking to Miſs Mirvan, for I was deſirous to avoid ſpeaking to him;—but in vain, for as ſoon as he had made his compliments to Lord Orville and Sir Clement Willoughby, who returned them very coldly, he bent his head forward, and ſaid to me, "I hope, Ma'am, you have enjoyed your health ſince I had the honour—I beg ten thouſand pardons, but I proteſt I was going to ſay the honour of *dancing* with you—however, I mean the honour of *ſeeing* you dance?"

He ſpoke with a ſelf-complacency that convinced me he had ſtudied this addreſs, by way of making reprizals for my conduct at the ball; I therefore bowed ſlightly, but made no anſwer.

After a ſhort ſilence, he again called my attention, by ſaying, in an eaſy, negligent way, "I think, Ma'am, you was never in town before?"

"No, Sir."

"So I did preſume. Doubtleſs, Ma'am, every thing muſt be infinitely novel to you. Our cuſtoms, our manners, and *les etiquettes de nous autres*, can have very little reſemblance to thoſe you have been uſed to. I imagine, Ma'am, your retirement is at no very ſmall diſtance from the capital?"

I was ſo much diſconcerted at this ſneering ſpeech, that I ſaid not a word; though I have ſince thought my vexation both ſtimulated and delighted him.

"The air we breathe here, however, Ma'am," (continued he, very conceitedly) "though foreign to that you have been accuſtomed to, has not, I hope, been at variance with your health?"

"Mr. Lovel," ſaid Lord Orville, "could not your *eye* have ſpared that queſtion?"

"O, my Lord," anſwered he, "if *health* were the only cauſe of a lady's bloom, my eye, I grant, had been infallible from the firſt glance; but—"

"Come, come," cried Mrs. Mirvan, "I muſt beg no inſinuations of that ſort; Miſs Anville's colour, as you have ſucceſſfully tried, may, you ſee, be heightened;—but I aſſure you, it would be paſt your ſkill to leſſen it."

"'Pon honour, Madam," returned he, "you wrong me; I preſumed not to infer that

that *rouge* was the only ſuccedaneum for health; but, really, I have known ſo many different cauſes for a lady's colour, ſuch as fluſhing,—anger,—*mauvaiſe honte*,—and ſo forth, that I never dare decide to which it may be owing."

"As to ſuch cauſes as them there," cried the Captain, "they muſt belong to thoſe that they keep company with."

"Very true, Captain," ſaid Sir Clement; "the natural complexion has nothing to do with occaſional ſallies of the paſſions, or any accidental cauſes."

"No, truly," returned the Captain, "for now here's me, why I look like any other man juſt now; and yet, if you were to put me in a paſſion, 'fore George you'd ſoon ſee me have as fine a high colour as any painted Jezabel in all this place, be ſhe never ſo bedaubed."

"But," ſaid Lord Orville, "the difference of natural and of artificial colour, ſeems to me very eaſily diſcerned; that of Nature is mottled, and varying; that of art, *ſet*, and *too* ſmooth; it wants that animation, that glow, that *indeſcribable ſomething* which, even now that I ſee it, wholly ſurpaſſes all my powers of expreſſion."

"Your Lordſhip," ſaid Sir Clement, "is univerſally acknowledged to be a *connoiſſeur* in beauty."

"And

"And you, Sir Clement," returned he, "an *enthuſiaſt*."

"I am proud to own it," cried Sir Clement; "in ſuch a cauſe, and before ſuch objects, enthuſiaſm is ſimply the conſequence of not being blind."

"Pr'ythee a truce with all this palavering," cried the Captain, "the women are vain enough already; no need for to puff 'em up more."

"We muſt all ſubmit to the commanding officer," ſaid Sir Clement, "therefore let us call another ſubject. Pray, Ladies, how have you been entertained with the play?"

"Want of entertainment," ſaid Mrs. Mirvan, "is its leaſt fault; but I own there are objections to it, which I ſhould be glad to ſee removed."

"I could have ventured to anſwer for the Ladies," ſaid Lord Orville, "ſince I am ſure this is not a play that can be honoured with their approbation."

"What, I ſuppoſe it is not ſentimental enough!" cried the Captain, "or elſe it's too good for them; for I'll maintain it's one of the beſt comedies in the language, and has more wit in one ſcene, than there is in all the new plays put together."

"For my part," ſaid Mr. Lovel, "I confeſs I ſeldom liſten to the players: one has

has ſo much to do, in looking about, and finding out one's acquaintance, that, really, one has no time to mind the ſtage. Pray," —(moſt affectedly fixing his eyes upon a diamond-ring on his little finger) "pray—what was the play to-night?"

"Why, what the D—l," cried the Captain, "do you come to the play, without knowing what it is?"

"O yes, Sir, yes, very frequently: I have no time to read play-bills; one merely comes to meet one's friends, and ſhew that one's alive."

"Ha, ha, ha!—and ſo," cried the Captain, "it coſts you five ſhillings a night, juſt to ſhew that you're alive! Well, faith, my friends ſhould all think me dead and under ground, before I'd be at that expence for 'em. Howſomever, this here you may take from me;—they'll find you out faſt enough, if you've any thing to give 'em.—And ſo you've been here all this time, and don't know what the play was?"

"Why, really, Sir, a play requires ſo much attention,—it is ſcarce poſſible to keep awake, if one liſtens;—for, indeed, by the time it is evening, one has been ſo fatigued, with dining,—or wine,—or the houſe,—or ſtudying,—that it is—it is perfectly an impoſſibility. But, now I think of it, I believe I have a bill in my pocket; O, ay,

ay, here it is—Love for Love, ay,—true, —ha, ha,—how could I be ſo ſtupid!"

"O, eaſily enough, as to that, I warrant you," ſaid the Captain; "but, by my ſoul, this is one of the beſt jokes I ever heard! Come to a play, and not know what it is! —Why, I ſuppoſe you would n't have found it out, if they had *fob'd* you off with a ſcraping of fidlers, or an opera?—Ha! ha! ha!—why now, I ſhould have thought you might have taken ſome notice of one Mr. *Tattle* that is in this play!"

This ſarcaſm, which cauſed a general ſmile, made him colour: but, turning to the Captain with a look of conceit, which implied that he had a retort ready, he ſaid, "Pray, Sir, give me leave to aſk,—what do *you* think of *one Mr. Ben*, who is alſo in this play?"

The Captain, regarding him with the utmoſt contempt, anſwered in a loud voice, "Think of him!—why I think he's a *man!*" And then, ſtaring full in his face, he ſtruck his cane on the ground, with a violence that made him ſtart. He did not, however, chuſe to take any notice of this; but, having bit his nails ſome time, in manifeſt confuſion, he turned very quick to me, and, in a ſneering tone of voice, ſaid, "For my part, I was moſt ſtruck with the *country* young lady, Miſs Prue; pray what do *you* think of her, Ma'am?"

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Sir," cried I, very much provoked, "I think—that is, I do not think any thing about her."

"Well, really, Ma'am, you prodigiouſly ſurpriſe me!—*mais, apparemment ce n'eſt qu'un façon de parler?*—though I ſhould beg your pardon, for probably you do not underſtand French?"

I made no anſwer, for I thought his rudeneſs intolerable; but Sir Clement, with great warmth, ſaid, "I am ſurpriſed that you can ſuppoſe ſuch an object as Miſs Prue would engage the attention of Miſs Anville even for a moment."

"O Sir," returned this fop, "'tis the firſt character in the piece!—ſo well drawn,—ſo much the thing!—ſuch true country-breeding,—ſuch rural ignorance!—ha! ha! ha!—'tis moſt admirably hit off, 'pon honour!"

I could almoſt have cried, that ſuch impertinence ſhould be levelled at me; and yet, chagrined as I was, I could never behold Lord Orville and this man at the ſame time, and feel any regret for the cauſe I had given of diſpleaſure.

"The only female in the play," ſaid Lord Orville, "worthy of being mentioned to theſe ladies, is Angelica."

"Angelica," cried Sir Clement, "is a noble

noble girl; ſhe tries her lover ſeverely, but ſhe rewards him generouſly."

"Yet, in a trial ſo long," ſaid Mrs. Mirvan, "there ſeems rather too much conſciouſneſs of her power."

"Since my opinion has the ſanction of Mrs. Mirvan's," added Lord Orville, "I will venture to ſay, that Angelica beſtows her hand rather with the air of a benefactreſs, than with the tenderneſs of a miſtreſs. Generoſity without delicacy, like wit without judgment, generally gives as much pain as pleaſure. The uncertainty in which ſhe keeps Valentine, and her manner of trifling with his temper, give no very favourable idea of her own."

"Well, my Lord," ſaid Mr. Lovel, "it muſt, however, be owned, that uncertainty is not the *ton* among our ladies at preſent; nay, indeed, I think they ſay, though, faith," taking a pinch of ſnuff, "I hope it is not true—but they ſay, that *we* now are moſt ſhy and backward."

The curtain then drew up, and our converſation ceaſed. Mr. Lovel, finding we choſe to attend to the players, left the box. How ſtrange it is, Sir, that this man, not contented with the large ſhare of foppery and nonſenſe which he has from nature, ſhould think proper to affect yet more! for what he ſaid of Tattle and of Miſs Prue, convinced

convinced me that he really had liſtened to the play, though he was ſo ridiculous and fooliſh as to pretend ignorance.

But how malicious and impertinent in this creature to talk to me in ſuch a manner! I am ſure I hope I ſhall never ſee him again. I ſhould have deſpiſed him heartily as a fop, had he never ſpoken to me at all; but now, that he thinks proper to reſent his ſuppoſed ill-uſage, I am really quite afraid of him.

The entertainment was, The Deuce is in him, which Lord Orville obſerved to be the moſt finiſhed and elegant *petite piece* that was ever written in Engliſh.

In our way home, Mrs. Mirvan put me into ſome conſternation, by ſaying it was evident, from the reſentment which this Mr. Lovel harbours of my conduct, that he would think it a provocation ſufficiently important for a duel, if his courage equalled his wrath.

I am terrified at the very idea. Good Heaven! that a man ſo weak and frivolous ſhould be ſo revengeful! However, if bravery would have excited him to affront Lord Orville, how much reaſon have I to rejoice, that cowardice makes him contented with venting his ſpleen upon me! But we ſhall leave town ſoon, and, I hope, ſee him no more.

It was ſome conſolation to me, to hear, from

from Miſs Mirvan, that, while he was ſpeaking to me ſo cavalierly, Lord Orville regarded him with great indignation.

But, really, I think there ought to be a book, of the laws and cuſtoms *à-la-mode*, preſented to all young people upon their firſt introduction into public company.

To-night we go to the opera, where I expect very great pleaſure. We ſhall have the ſame party as at the play; for Lord Orville ſaid he ſhould be there, and would look for us.

LETTER XXI.

Evelina in continuation.

I HAVE a volume to write of the adventures of yeſterday.

In the afternoon,—at Berry Hill, I ſhould have ſaid the *evening*, for it was almoſt ſix o'clock,—while Miſs Mirvan and I were dreſſing for the opera, and in high ſpirits, from the expectation of great entertainment and pleaſure, we heard a carriage ſtop at the door, and concluded that Sir Clement Willoughby, with his uſual aſſiduity, was come to attend us to the Haymarket; but, in a few moments, what was our ſurmoſt priſe,

priſe, to ſee our chamber-door flung open, and the two Miſs Branghtons enter the room! They advanced to me with great familiarity, ſaying, "How do you do, couſin?—ſo we've caught you at the glaſs!—well, I'm determined I'll tell my brother of that!"

Miſs Mirvan, who had never before ſeen them, and could not, at firſt, imagine who they were, looked ſo much aſtoniſhed, that I was ready to laugh myſelf, till the eldeſt ſaid, "We're come to take you to the opera, Miſs; papa and my brother are below, and we are to call for your grand-mama as we go along."

"I am very ſorry," anſwered I, "that you ſhould have taken ſo much trouble, as I am engaged already."

"Engaged! Lord, Miſs, never mind that," cried the youngeſt, "this young lady will make your excuſes, I dare ſay; it's only doing as one would be done by, you know."

"Indeed, Ma'am," ſaid Miſs Mirvan, "I ſhall myſelf be very ſorry to be deprived of Miſs Anville's company this evening."

"Well, Miſs, that is not ſo very good-natured in you," ſaid Miſs Branghton, "conſidering we only come to give our couſin pleaſure; it's no good to us; it's all upon

upon her account; for we came, I don't know how much round about to take her up."

"I am extremely obliged to you," ſaid I, "and very ſorry you have loſt ſo much time; but I cannot poſſibly help it, for I engaged myſelf without knowing you would call."

"Lord, what ſignifies that?" ſaid Miſs Polly, "you're no old maid, and ſo you need n't be ſo very formal: beſides, I dare ſay thoſe you are engaged to, a'n't half ſo near related to you as we are."

"I muſt beg you not to preſs me any further, for I aſſure you it is not in my power to attend you."

"Why we came all out of the city on purpoſe: beſides, your grand-mama expects you;—and pray, what are we to ſay to her?"

"Tell her, if you pleaſe, that I am much concerned,—but that I am pre-engaged."

"And who to?" demanded the abrupt Miſs Branghton.

"To Mrs. Mirvan,—and a large party."

"And, pray, what are you all going to do, that it would be ſuch a mighty matter for you to come along with us?"

"We are all going to—to the opera."

"O dear, if that be all, why can't we go all together?"

I was

I was extremely diſconcerted at this forward and ignorant behaviour, and yet their rudeneſs very much leſſened my concern at refuſing them. Indeed, their dreſs was ſuch as would have rendered their ſcheme of accompanying our party impracticable, even if I had deſired it; and this, as they did not themſelves find out, I was obliged, in terms the leaſt mortifying I could think of, to tell them.

They were very much chagrined, and aſked where I ſhould ſit?

"In the pit," anſwered I.

"In the pit!" repeated Miſs Branghton, "well, really, I muſt own I ſhould never have ſuppoſed that my gown was not good enough for the pit; but come, Polly, let's go; if Miſs does not think us fine enough for her, why to be ſure ſhe may chuſe."

Surpriſed at this ignorance, I would have explained to them that the pit at the opera required the ſame dreſs as the boxes; but they were ſo much affronted, they would not hear me, and, in great diſpleaſure, left the room, ſaying they would not have troubled me, only they thought I ſhould not be ſo proud with my own relations, and that they had at leaſt as good a right to my company as ſtrangers.

I endeavoured to apologize, and would have ſent a long meſſage to Madame Duval;

but they haſtened away without liſtening to me; and I could not follow them down ſtairs, becauſe I was not dreſſed. The laſt words I heard them ſay, were, "Well, her grand-mama will be in a fine paſſion, that's one good thing."

Though I was extremely mad at this viſit, yet I ſo heartily rejoiced at their going, that I would not ſuffer myſelf to think gravely about it.

Soon after, Sir Clement actually came, and we all went down ſtairs. Mrs. Mirvan ordered tea; and we were engaged in a very lively converſation, when the ſervant announced Madame Duval, who inſtantly followed him into the room.

Her face was the colour of ſcarlet, and her eyes ſparkled with fury. She came up to me with a haſty ſtep, ſaying, "So, Miſs, you refuſes to come to me, do you? And pray who are you, to dare to diſobey me?"

I was quite frightened;—I made no anſwer;—I even attempted to riſe, and could not, but ſat ſtill, mute and motionleſs.

Every body, but Miſs Mirvan, ſeemed in the utmoſt aſtoniſhment; and the Captain, riſing and approaching Madame Duval, with a voice of authority, ſaid, "Why how now, Mrs. Turkey Cock, what's put you into this here fluſter?"

"It's nothing to you," anſwered ſhe, "ſo

"ſo you may as well hold your tongue, for I ſha'n't be called to no account by you, I aſſure you."

"There you're out, Madam Fury," returned he, "for you muſt know I never ſuffer any body to be in a paſſion in my houſe, but myſelf."

"But you *ſhall*," cried ſhe, in a great rage, "for I'll be in as great a paſſion as ever I pleaſe, without aſking your leave; ſo don't give yourſelf no more airs about it. And as for you, Miſs," again advancing to me, "I order you to follow me this moment, or elſe I'll make you repent it all your life." And, with theſe words, ſhe flung out of the room.

I was in ſuch extreme terror, at being addreſſed and threatened in a manner to which I am ſo wholly unuſed, that I almoſt thought I ſhould have fainted.

"Don't be alarmed, my love," cried Mrs. Mirvan, "but ſtay where you are, and I will follow Madame Duval, and try to bring her to reaſon."

Miſs Mirvan took my hand, and moſt kindly endeavoured to raiſe my ſpirits: Sir Clement, too, approached me, with an air ſo intereſted in my diſtreſs, that I could not but feel myſelf obliged to him; and, taking my other hand, ſaid, "For Heaven's ſake, my dear Madam, compoſe yourſelf; ſurely

the violence of such a wretch ought merely to move your contempt; she can have no right, I imagine, to lay her commands upon you, and I only wish that you would allow me to speak to her."

"O no! not for the world!—indeed, I believe,—I am afraid—I had better follow her."

"Follow her! Good God, my dear Miss Anville, would you trust yourself with a mad woman? for what else can you call a creature whose passions are so insolent? No, no; send her word at once to leave the house, and tell her you desire that she will never see you again."

"O Sir! you don't know who you talk of!—it would ill become me to send Madame Duval such a message."

"But *why*," cried he, looking very inquisitive, "*why* should you scruple to treat her as she deserves?"

I then found that his aim was to discover the nature of her connection with me; but I felt so much ashamed of my near relationship to her, that I could not persuade myself to answer him, and only entreated that he would leave her to Mrs. Mirvan, who just then entered the room.

Before she could speak to me, the Captain called out, "Well, Goody, what have you done with Madame French? is she

cooled a little? cauſe if ſhe be n't, I've juſt thought of a moſt excellent device to bring her to.

"My dear Evelina," ſaid Mrs. Mirvan, "I have been vainly endeavouring to appeaſe her; I pleaded your engagement, and promiſed your future attendance: but I am ſorry to ſay, my love, that I fear her rage will end in a total breach (which I think you had better avoid) if ſhe is any further oppoſed."

"Then I will go to her, Madam," cried I, "and, indeed, it is now no matter, for I ſhould not be able to recover my ſpirits ſufficiently to enjoy much pleaſure *any* where this evening."

Sir Clement began a very warm expoſtulation, and entreaty, that I would not go; but I begged him to deſiſt, and told him, very honeſtly, that, if my compliance were not indiſpenſably neceſſary, I ſhould require no perſuaſion to ſtay. He then took my hand, to lead me down ſtairs; but the Captain deſired him to be quiet, ſaying he would ſquire me himſelf, becauſe, "he added, (exultingly rubbing his hands) "I have a wipe ready for the old lady, which may ſerve her to *toco* as ſhe goes along."

We found her in the parlour. "O, you're come at laſt, Miſs, are you?—fine airs you give yourſelf, indeed!—*ma foi*, if you

you had n't come, you might have ſtayed, I aſſure you, and have been a beggar for your pains."

"Heyday, Madam," cried the Captain, (prancing forward, with a look of great glee,) "what, a'n't you got out of that there paſſion yet? why then, I'll tell you what to do to cool yourſelf; call upon your old friend, *Monſeer* Slippery, who was with you at Ranelagh, and give my ſervice to him, and tell him, if he ſets any ſtore by your health, that I deſire he'll give you ſuch another louſe as he did before: he'll know what I mean, and I'll warrant you he'll do't for my ſake."

"Let him, if he dares!" cried Madame Duval; "but I ſha'n't ſtay to anſwer you no more; you are a vulgar fellow,—and ſo, child, let us leave him to himſelf."

"Hark ye, Madam," cried the Captain, "you'd beſt not call names, becauſe, d'ye ſee, if you do, I ſhall make bold to ſhow you the door."

She changed colour, and ſaying, "*Pardi*, I can ſhew it myſelf," hurried out of the room, and I followed her into a hackney-coach. But before we drove off, the Captain, looking out of the parlour window, called out, "D'ye hear, Madam,—don't forget my meſſage to *Monſeer*."

You will believe our ride was not the moſt

moſt agreeable in the world; indeed, it would be difficult to ſay which was leaſt pleaſed, Madame Duval or me, though the reaſons of our diſcontent were ſo different: however, Madame Duval ſoon got the ſtart of me; for we had hardly turned out of Queen-Ann-ſtreet, when a man, running full ſpeed, ſtopt the coach. He came up to the window, and I ſaw he was the Captain's ſervant. He had a broad grin on his face, and panted for breath. Madame Duval demanded his buſineſs; "Madam," anſwered he, "my maſter deſires his compliments to you, and—and—and he ſays he wiſhes it well over with you. He! he! he!—"

Madame Duval inſtantly darted forward, and gave him a violent blow on the face; "Take that back for your anſwer, ſirrah," cried ſhe, "and learn to grin at your betters another time. Coachman, drive on!"

The ſervant was in a violent paſſion, and ſwore terribly; but we were ſoon out of hearing.

The rage of Madame Duval was greater than ever, and ſhe inveighed againſt the Captain with ſuch fury, that I was even apprehenſive ſhe would have returned to his houſe, purpoſely to reproach him, which ſhe repeatedly threatened to do; nor would ſhe, I believe, have heſitated a mo-

ment, but that, notwithstanding her violence, he has really made her afraid of him.

When we came to her lodgings, we found all the Branghtons in the passage, impatiently waiting for us, with the door open.

"Only see, here's Miss!" cried the brother.

"Well, I declare I thought as much!" said the younger sister.

"Why, Miss," said Mr. Branghton, "I think you might as well have come with your cousins at once; it's throwing money in the dirt, to pay two coaches for one fare."

"Lord, father," cried the son, "make no words about that, for I'll pay for the coach that Miss had."

"O, I know very well," answered Mr. Branghton, "that you're always more ready to spend than to earn."

I then interfered, and begged that I might myself be allowed to pay the fares, as the expence was incurred upon my account; they all refused me, and proposed that the same coach should carry us on to the opera-house.

While this passed, the Miss Branghtons were examining my dress, which, indeed, was very improper for my company; and as I was extremely unwilling to be so conspicuous amongst them, I requested Madame

dame Duval to borrow a hat or bonnet for me of the people of the house. But she never wears either herself, and thinks them very *English* and barbarous; therefore she insisted that I should go full dressed, as I had prepared myself for the pit, though I made many objections.

We were then all crowded into the same carriage, but when we arrived at the opera-house, I contrived to pay the coachman. They made a great many speeches, but Mr. Branghton's reflection had determined me not to be indebted to him.

If I had not been too much chagrined to laugh, I should have been extremely diverted at their ignorance of whatever belongs to an opera. In the first place, they could not tell at what door we ought to enter, and we wandered about for some time, without knowing which way to turn; they did not chuse to apply to me, though I was the only person of the party, who had ever before been at an opera, because they were unwilling to suppose that their *country cousin*, as they were pleased to call me, should be better acquainted with any London public place than themselves. I was very indifferent and careless upon this subject, but not a little uneasy at finding that my dress, so different from that of the company to which I belonged,

I belonged, attracted general notice and obſervation.

In a ſhort time, however, we arrived at one of the door-keeper's *bars*. Mr. Branghton demanded for what part of the houſe they took money? They anſwered, the pit, and regarded us all with great earneſtneſs. The ſon then advancing, ſaid, "Sir, if you pleaſe, I beg that I may treat Miſs."

"We'll ſettle that another time," anſwered Mr. Branghton, and put down a guinea.

Two tickets of admiſſion were given to him.

Mr. Branghton, in his turn, now ſtared at the door-keeper, and demanded what he meant by giving him only two tickets for a guinea?

"Only two, Sir!" ſaid the man, "why don't you know that the tickets are half a guinea each?"

"Half a guinea each!" repeated Mr. Branghton, "why I never heard of ſuch a thing in my life! And pray, Sir, how many will they admit?"

"Juſt as uſual, Sir, one perſon each."

"But one perſon for half a guinea!—why I only want to ſit in the pit, friend."

"Had not the Ladies better ſit in the gallery, Sir; for they'll hardly chuſe to go into the pit with their hats on?"

"O, as

"O, as to that," cried Miss Branghton, "if our hats are too high, we'll take them off when we get in. I sha'n't mind it, for I did my hair on purpose."

Another party then approaching, the door-keeper could no longer attend to Mr. Branghton, who, taking up the guinea, told him it should be long enough before he'd see it again, and walked away.

The young ladies, in some confusion, expressed their surprise, that their *papa* should not know the Opera prices, which, for their parts, they had read in the papers a thousand times.

"The price of stocks," said he, "is enough for me to see after; and I took it for granted it was the same thing here as at the play-house."

"I knew well enough what the price was," said the son, "but I would not speak, because I thought perhaps they'd take less, as we're such a large party."

The sisters both laughed very contemptuously at this idea, and asked him if he ever heard of *people's abating* any thing at a public place?

"I don't know whether I have or no," answered he, "but I'm sure if they would, you'd like it so much the worse."

"Very true, Tom," cried Mr. Branghton;

ton. "tell a woman that any thing is reasonable, and she'll be sure to have it."

"Well," said Miss Polly, "I hope then Aunt and Miss will be of our side, for Papa always takes part with Tom."

"Come, come," cried Madame Duval, "if you stand talking here, we sha'n't get no place at all."

Mr. Branghton then enquired the way to the gallery, and, when we came to the door-keeper, demanded what was to pay.

"The usual price, Sir," said the man.

"Then give me change," cried Mr. Branghton, again putting down his guinea.

"For how many, Sir?"

"Why—let's see—for six."

"For six, Sir? why you've given me but a guinea."

"*But* a guinea! why how much would you have? I suppose it isn't half a guinea apiece here, too?"

"No, Sir, only five shillings."

Mr. Branghton again took up his unfortunate guinea, and protested he would submit to no such imposition. I then proposed that we should return home, but Madame Duval would not consent, and we were conducted, by a woman who sells books of the Opera, to another gallery-door, where, after some disputing, Mr. Branghton at last paid, and we all went up stairs.

Madame

Madame Duval complained very much of the trouble of going so high, but Mr. Branghton desired her not to hold the place too cheap, "for, whatever you may think," cried he, "I assure you I paid pit price; so don't suppose I come here to save my money."

"Well, to be sure," said Miss Branghton, "there's no judging of a place by the outside, else, I must needs say, there's nothing very extraordinary in the staircase."

But, when we entered the gallery, their amazement and disappointment became general. For a few instants, they looked at one another without speaking, and then they all broke silence at once.

"Lord, Papa," exclaimed Miss Polly, "why you have brought us to the one-shilling gallery!"

"I'll be glad to give you two shillings, though," answered he "to pay. I was never so fooled out of my money before, since the hour of my birth. Either the door-keeper's a knave, or this is the greatest imposition that ever was put upon the public."

"*Ma foi*," cried Madame Duval, "I never sat in such a mean place in all my life; why it's as high!—we sha'n't see nothing."

"I thought at the time," said Mr.

Branghton, "that three ſhillings was an exorbitant price for a place in the gallery, but as we'd been aſked ſo much more at the other doors, why I paid it without many words; but then, to be ſure, thinks I, it can never be like any other gallery,—we ſhall ſee ſome *crinkum-crankum* or other for our money;—but I find it's as arrant a take-in as ever I met with."

"Why it's as like the twelvepenny gallery at Drury-lane," cried the ſon, "as two peas are to one another. I never knew father ſo bit before."

"Lord," ſaid Miſs Branghton, "I thought it would have been quite a fine place,—all over I don't know what,—and done quite in taſte."

In this manner they continued to expreſs their diſſatisfaction till the curtain drew up; after which, their obſervations were very curious. They made no allowance for the cuſtoms, or even for the language of another country, but formed all their remarks upon compariſons with the Engliſh theatre.

Notwithſtanding my vexation at having been forced into a party ſo very diſagreeable, and that, too, from one ſo much—ſo very much the contrary—yet, would they have ſuffered me to liſten, I ſhould have forgotten every thing unpleaſant, and felt nothing but delight in hearing the ſweet

voice of Signor Millico, the firſt ſinger; but they tormented me with continual talking.

"What a jabbering they make!" cried Mr. Branghton; "there's no knowing a word they ſay. Pray what's the reaſon they can't as well ſing in Engliſh?—but I ſuppoſe the fine folks would not like it, if they could underſtand it."

"How unnatural their action is!" ſaid the ſon; "why now who ever ſaw an Engliſhman put himſelf in ſuch out-of-the-way poſtures?"

"For my part," ſaid Miſs Polly, "I think it's very pretty, only I don't know what it means."

"Lord, what does that ſignify?" cried her ſiſter; "may n't one like a thing without being ſo very particular?—You may ſee that Miſs likes it, and I don't ſuppoſe ſhe knows more of the matter than we do."

A gentleman, ſoon after, was ſo obliging as to make room in the front row for Miſs Branghton and me. We had no ſooner ſeated ourſelves, than Miſs Branghton exclaimed, "Good gracious! only ſee!—why, Polly, all the people in the pit are without hats, dreſſed like any thing!"

"Lord, ſo they are," cried Miſs Polly, "well, I never ſaw the like!—it's worth coming

coming to the Opera if one saw nothing else!"

I was then able to distinguish the happy party I had left, and I saw that Lord Orville had seated himself next to Mrs. Mirvan. Sir Clement had his eyes perpetually cast towards the five-shilling gallery, where I suppose he concluded that we were seated; however, before the Opera was over, I have reason to believe that he had discovered me, high and distant as I was from him. Probably he distinguished me by my head-dress.

At the end of the first act, as the green curtain dropped, to prepare for the dance, they imagined that the Opera was done, and Mr. Branghton expressed great indignation that he had been *tricked* out of his money with so little trouble. "Now if any Englishman was to do such an impudent thing as this," said he, "why he'd be pelted,—but here, one of these outlandish gentry may do just what he pleases, and come on, and squeak out a song or two, and then pocket your money without further ceremony."

However, so determined he was to be dissatisfied, that before the conclusion of the third act, he found still more fault with the Opera for being too long, and wondered whether they thought their singing good enough to serve us for supper.

During

During the ſymphony of a ſong of Signor Millico's, in the ſecond act, young Mr. Branghton ſaid, "It's my belief that that fellow's going to ſing another ſong!—why there's nothing but ſinging!—I wonder when they'll ſpeak."

This ſong, which was ſlow and pathetic, caught all my attention, and I lean'd my head forward to avoid hearing their obſervations, that I might liſten without interruption; but, upon turning round, when the ſong was over, I found that I was the object of general diverſion to the whole party; for the Miſs Branghtons were tittering, and the two gentlemen making ſigns and faces at me, implying their contempt of my affectation.

This diſcovery determined me to appear as inattentive as themſelves, but I was very much provoked at being thus prevented enjoying the only pleaſure, which, in ſuch a party, was within my power.

"So, Miſs," ſaid Mr. Branghton, "you're quite in the faſhion, I ſee;—ſo you like Operas? well, I'm not ſo polite; I can't like nonſenſe, let it be never ſo much the taſte."

"But pray, Miſs," ſaid the ſon, "what makes that fellow look ſo doleful while he's ſinging?"

"Probably

"Probably because the character he performs is in distress."

"Why then I think he might as well let alone singing till he's in better one: it's out of all nature for a man to be piping when he's in distress. For my part, I never sing but when I'm merry; yet I love a song as well as most people."

When the curtain dropt, they all rejoiced.

"How do *you* like it?—and how do *you* like it?" passed from one to another with looks of the utmost contempt. "As for me," said Mr. Branghton, "they've caught me once, but if ever they do again, I'll give 'em leave to sing me to Bedlam for my pains: for such a heap of stuff never did I hear; there is n't one ounce of sense in the whole Opera, nothing but one continued squeaking and squalling from beginning to end."

"If I had been in the pit," said Madame Duval, "I should have liked it vastly, for music is my passion; but sitting in such a place as this, is quite unbearable."

Miss Branghton, looking at me, declared, that she was not *genteel* enough to admire it.

Miss Polly confessed, that, if they would but

but sing *English*, she should like it *very well.*

The brother wished he could raise a riot in the house, because then he might get his money again.

And, finally, they all agreed, that it was *monstrous dear.*

During the last dance, I perceived, standing near the gallery-door, Sir Clement Willoughby. I was extremely vexed, and would have given the world to have avoided being seen by him: my chief objection was, from the apprehension that he would hear Miss Branghton call me *cousin.*—I fear you will think this London journey has made me grow very proud; but indeed this family is so low-bred and vulgar, that I should be equally ashamed of such a connexion in the country, or any where. And really I had already been so much chagrined that Sir Clement had been a witness of Madame Duval's power over me, that I could not bear to be exposed to any further mortification.

As the seats cleared, by parties going away, Sir Clement approached nearer to us; the Miss Branghtons observed with surprise, what a fine gentleman was come into the gallery, and they gave me great reason to expect, that they would endeavour to attract his notice, by familiarity with me,

whenever

whenever he ſhould join us; and ſo, I formed a ſort of plan, to prevent any converſation. I am afraid you will think it wrong; and ſo I do myſelf now, but, at the time, I only conſidered how I might avoid immediate humiliation.

As ſoon as he was within two ſeats of us, he ſpoke to me, "I am very happy, Miſs Anville, to have found you, for the Ladies below have each an humble attendant, and therefore I am come to offer my ſervices here."

"Why then," cried I, (not without heſitating) "if you pleaſe, I will join them."

"Will you allow me the honour of conducting you?" cried he eagerly; and inſtantly taking my hand, he would have marched away with me: but I turned to Madame Duval, and ſaid, "As our party is ſo large, Madam, if you will give me leave, I will go down to Mrs. Mirvan, that I may not crowd you in the coach."

And then, without waiting for an anſwer, I ſuffered Sir Clement to hand me out of the gallery.

Madame Duval, I doubt not, will be very angry, and ſo I am with myſelf, now, and therefore I cannot be ſurpriſed: but Mr. Brighton, I am ſure, will eaſily comfort himſelf, on having eſcaped the additional coach expence of carrying me to

Queen-

Queen-Ann-ſtreet to as to his daughters, they had no time to ſpeak, but I ſaw they were in utter amazement.

My intention was to join Mrs. Mirvan, and accompany her home. Sir Clement was in high ſpirits and good humour; and, all the way we went, I was fool enough to rejoice in ſecret at the ſucceſs of my plan; nor was it till I got down ſtairs, and amidſt the ſervants, that any difficulty occurred to me of meeting with my friends.

I then aſked Sir Clement how I ſhould contrive to acquaint Mrs. Mirvan that I had left Madame Duval?

"I fear it will be almoſt impoſſible to find her," anſwered he; "but you can have no objection to permitting me to ſee you ſafe home."

He then deſired his ſervant, who was waiting, to order his chariot to draw up.

This quite ſtartled me; I turned to him haſtily, and ſaid that I could not think of going away without Mrs. Mirvan.

"But how can we meet with her?" cried he; "you will not chuſe to go into the city yourſelf, I cannot ſend a ſervant there, and it is impoſſible for *me* to go and leave you alone."

The truth of this was indiſputable, and totally ſilenced me. Yet, as ſoon as I could recollect myſelf, I determined not to go in his

his chariot, and told him I believed I had beſt return to my party up ſtairs.

He would not hear of this; and earneſtly entreated me not to withdraw the truſt I had repoſed in him.

While he was ſpeaking, I ſaw Lord Orville, with ſeveral ladies and gentlemen, coming from the pit paſſage: unfortunately, he ſaw me too, and, leaving his company, advanced inſtantly towards me, and, with an air and voice of ſurpriſe, ſaid, "Good God, do I ſee Miſs Anville!"

I now moſt ſeverely felt the folly of my plan, and the awkwardneſs of my ſituation; however, I haſtened to tell him, though in a heſitating manner, that I was waiting for Mrs. Mirvan; but what was my diſappointment, when he acquainted me that ſhe was already gone home!

I was inexpreſſibly diſtreſſed, to ſuffer Lord Orville to think me ſatisfied with the ſingle protection of Sir Clement Willoughby, I could not bear; yet I was more than ever averſe to returning to a party which I dreaded his ſeeing: I ſtood ſome moments in ſuſpenſe, and could not help exclaiming, "Good Heaven, what can I do!"

"Why, my dear Madam," cried Sir Clement, "ſhould you be thus uneaſy? you will reach Queen Ann-ſtreet almoſt as ſoon as

as Mrs. Mirvan, and I am ſure you cannot doubt being as ſafe."

I made no anſwer, and Lord Orville then ſaid, "My coach is here; and my ſervants are ready to take any commands Miſs Anville will honour me with for them. I ſhall myſelf go home in a chair, and therefore—"

How grateful did I feel for a propoſal ſo conſiderate, and made with ſo much delicacy! I ſhould gladly have accepted it, had I been permitted; but Sir Clement would not let him even finiſh his ſpeech; he interrupted him with evident diſpleaſure, and ſaid, "My Lord, my own chariot is now at the door."

And juſt then the ſervant came, and told him the carriage was ready. He begged to have the honour of conducting me to it, and would have taken my hand, but I drew it back, ſaying, "I can't—I can't indeed! pray go by yourſelf—and as to me, let me have a chair."

"Impoſſible!" (cried he with vehemence) "I cannot think of truſting you with ſtrange chairmen,—I cannot anſwer it to Mrs. Mirvan;—come, dear Madam, we ſhall be home in five minutes."

Again I ſtood ſuſpended. With what joy would I then have compromiſed with my pride, to have been once more with

Madame

Madame Duval and the Branghtons, provided I had not met with Lord Orville! However, I flatter myself that he not only saw, but pitied my embarrassment, for he said, in a tone of voice unusually softened, "To offer my services in the presence of Sir Clement Willoughby would be superfluous, but I hope I need not assure Miss Anville, how happy it would make me to be of the least use to her."

I courtsied my thanks. Sir Clement, with great earnestness, pressed me to go, and while I was thus uneasily deliberating what to do, the dance, I suppose, finished, for the people crowded down stairs. Had Lord Orville then repeated his offer, I would have accepted it, notwithstanding Sir Clement's repugnance; but I fancy he thought it would be impertinent. In a very few minutes I heard Madame Duval's voice, as she descended from the gallery; "Well," cried I, hastily, "if I must go—" I stopt, but Sir Clement immediately handed me into his chariot, called out "Queen Ann-street," and then jumped in himself. Lord Orville, with a bow and a half smile, wished me good night.

My concern was so great, at being seen and left by Lord Orville in so strange a situation, that I should have been best pleased to have remained wholly silent during

ing

ing our ride home: but Sir Clement took care to prevent that.

He began by making many complaints of my unwillingness to trust myself with him, and begged to know what could be the reason? This question so much embarrassed me, that I could not tell what to answer, but only said, that I was sorry to have taken up so much of his time.

"O Miss Anville," (cried he, taking my hand) "if you knew with what transport I would dedicate to you not only the present but all the future time allotted to me, you would not injure me by making such an apology."

I could not think of a word to say to this, nor to a great many other equally fine speeches with which he ran on, though I would fain have withdrawn my hand, and made almost continual attempts; but in vain, for he actually grasped it between both his, without any regard to my resistance.

Soon after, he said that he believed the coachman was going the wrong way, and he called to his servant, and gave him directions. Then again addressing himself to me, "How often, how assiduously have I sought an opportunity of speaking to you, without the presence of that brute, Captain Mirvan! Fortune has now kindly favoured

me-

me with one, and permit me," (again ſeizing my hand) "permit me to uſe it, in telling you that I adore you."

I was quite thunderſtruck at this abrupt and unexpected declaration. For ſome moments I was ſilent; but, when I recovered from my ſurpriſe, I ſaid, "Indeed, Sir, if you were determined to make me repent leaving my own party ſo fooliſhly, you have very well ſucceeded."

"My deareſt life," cried he, "is it poſſible you can be ſo cruel? Can your nature and your countenance be ſo totally oppoſite? Can the ſweet bloom upon thoſe charming cheeks, which appears as much the reſult of good humour as of beauty—"

"O, Sir," cried I, interrupting him, "this is very fine; but I had hoped we had had enough of this ſort of converſation at the Ridotto, and I did not expect you would ſo ſoon reſume it."

"What I then ſaid, my ſweet reproacher, was the effect of a miſtaken, a prophane idea, that your underſtanding held no competition with your beauty; but now, now that I find you equally incomparable in both, all words, all powers of ſpeech, are too feeble to expreſs the admiration I feel of your excellencies."

"Indeed," cried I, "if your thoughts had any connexion with your language, you would

would never ſuppoſe that I could give credit to praiſe ſo very much above my deſert."

This ſpeech, which I made very gravely, occaſioned ſtill ſtronger proteſtations, which he continued to pour forth, and I continued to diſclaim, till I began to wonder that we were not in Queen-Ann-ſtreet, and begged he would deſire the coachman to drive faſter.

"And does this little moment," cried he, "which is the firſt of happineſs I have ever known, does it already appear ſo very long to you?"

"I am afraid the man has miſtaken the way," anſwered I, "or elſe we ſhould ere now have been at our journey's end. I muſt beg you will ſpeak to him."

"And can you think me ſo much my own enemy?—if my good genius has inſpired the man with a deſire of prolonging my happineſs, can you expect that I ſhould counter-act its indulgence?"

I now began to apprehend that he had himſelf ordered the man to go a wrong way, and I was ſo much alarmed at the idea, that, the very inſtant it occurred to me, I let down the glaſs, and made a ſudden effort to open the chariot-door myſelf, with a view of jumping into the ſtreet; but he caught hold of me, exclaiming, "For Heaven's ſake, what is the matter?"

"I—I don't know," cried I, (quite out

of breath) "but I am ſure the man goes wrong, and, if you will not ſpeak to him, I am determined I will get out myſelf."

"You amaze me," anſwered he, (ſtill holding me) "I cannot imagine what you apprehend. Surely you can have no doubts of my honour?"

He drew me towards him as he ſpoke. I was frightened dreadfully, and could hardly ſay, "No, Sir, no,—none at all,—only Mrs. Mirvan,—I think ſhe will be uneaſy."

"Whence this alarm, my deareſt angel?—What can you fear?—my life is at your devotion, and can you, then, doubt my protection?"

And ſo ſaying, he paſſionately kiſſed my hand.

Never, in my whole life, have I been ſo terrified. I broke forcibly from him, and, putting my head out of the window, called aloud to the man to ſtop. Where we then were I know not, but I ſaw not a human being, or I ſhould have called for help.

Sir Clement, with great earneſtneſs, endeavoured to appeaſe and compoſe me; "If you do not intend to murder me," cried I, "for mercy's, for pity's ſake, let me get out!"

"Compoſe your ſpirits, my deareſt life," cried he, "and I will do every thing you

would have me." And then he called to the man himſelf, and bid him make haſte to Queen-Ann-ſtreet. "This ſtupid fellow," continued he, "has certainly miſtaken my orders; but I hope you are now fully ſatisfied."

I made no anſwer, but kept my head at the window, watching which way he drove, but without any comfort to myſelf, as I was quite unacquainted with either the right or the wrong.

Sir Clement now poured forth abundant proteſtations of honour, and aſſurances of reſpect, entreating my pardon for having offended me, and beſeeching my good opinion: but I was quite ſilent, having too much apprehenſion to make reproaches, and too much anger to ſpeak without.

In this manner we went through ſeveral ſtreets, till at laſt, to my great terror, he ſuddenly ordered the man to ſtop, and ſaid, "Miſs Anville, we are now within twenty yards of your houſe; but I cannot bear to part with you, till you generouſly forgive me for the offence you have taken, and promiſe not to make it known to the Mirvans."

I heſitated between fear and indignation.

"Your reluctance to ſpeak, redoubles my contrition for having diſpleaſed you, ſince it ſhews the reliance I might have on

a promiſe which you will not give without conſideration."

"I am very, very much diſtreſſed," cried I; "you aſk a promiſe which you muſt be ſenſible I ought not to grant, and yet dare not refuſe."

"Drive on!" cried he to the coachman; —"Miſs Anville, I will not compel you; I will exact no promiſe, but truſt wholly to your generoſity."

This rather ſoftened me; which advantage he no ſooner perceived, than he determined to avail himſelf of, for he flung himſelf on his knees, and pleaded with ſo much ſubmiſſion, that I was really obliged to forgive him, becauſe his humiliation made me quite aſhamed: and, after that, he would not let me reſt till I gave him my word that I would not complain of him to Mrs. Mirvan.

My own folly and pride, which had put me in his power, were pleas which I could not but attend to in his favour. However, I ſhall take very particular care never to be again alone with him.

When, at laſt, we arrived at our houſe, I was ſo overjoyed, that I ſhould certainly have pardoned him then, if I had not before. As he handed me up ſtairs, he ſcolded his ſervant aloud, and very angrily, for having gone ſo much out of the way. Miſs Mirvan

Mirvan ran out to meet me,—and who ſhould I ſee behind her, but—Lord Orville!

All my joy now vaniſhed, and gave place to ſhame and confuſion; for I could not endure that he ſhould know how long a time Sir Clement and I had been together, ſince I was not at liberty to aſſign any reaſon for it.

They all expreſſed great ſatisfaction at ſeeing me, and ſaid they had been extremely uneaſy and ſurpriſed that I was ſo long coming home, as they had heard from Lord Orville that I was not with Madame Duval. Sir Clement, in an affected paſſion, ſaid that his booby of a ſervant had miſunderſtood his orders, and was driving us to the upper end of Piccadilly. For my part, I only coloured; for though I would not forfeit my word, I yet diſdained to confirm a tale in which I had myſelf no belief.

Lord Orville, with great politeneſs, congratulated me, that the troubles of the evening had ſo happily ended, and ſaid, that he had found it impoſſible to return home, before he enquired after my ſafety.

In a very ſhort time he took leave, and Sir Clement followed him. As ſoon as they were gone, Mrs. Mirvan, though w th great ſoftneſs, blamed me for having quit-

ted Madame Duval. I aſſured her, and with truth, that for the future I would be more prudent.

The adventures of the evening ſo much diſconcerted me, that I could not ſleep all night. I am under the moſt cruel apprehenſions, leſt Lord Orville ſhould ſuppoſe my being on the gallery-ſtairs with Sir Clement was a concerted ſcheme, and even that our continuing ſo long together in his chariot, was with my approbation, ſince I did not ſay a word on the ſubject, nor expreſs any diſſatisfaction at the coachman's pretended blunder.

Yet his coming hither to wait our arrival, though it ſeems to imply ſome doubt, ſhews alſo ſome anxiety. Indeed Miſs Mirvan ſays, that he appeared *extremely* anxious, nay uneaſy and impatient for my return. If I did not fear to flatter myſelf, I ſhould think it not impoſſible but that he had a ſuſpicion of Sir Clement's deſign, and was therefore concerned for my ſafety.

What a long letter is this! however, I ſhall not write many more from London, for the Captain ſaid this morning, that he would leave town on Tueſday next. Madame Duval will dine here to-day, and then ſhe is to be told his intention.

I am very much amazed that ſhe accepted Mrs. Mirvan's invitation, as ſhe was in ſuch wrath

wrath yeſterday. I fear that to day I ſhall myſelf be the principal object of her diſpleaſure; but I muſt ſubmit patiently, for I cannot defend myſelf.

Adieu, my deareſt Sir. Should this letter be productive of any uneaſineſs to you, more than ever ſhall I repent the heedleſs imprudence which it recites.

LETTER XXII.

Evelina in continuation.

Monday Morning, April 18.

MRS. Mirvan has juſt communicated to me an anecdote concerning Lord Orville, which has much ſurpriſed, half pleaſed, and half pained me.

While they were ſitting together during the opera, he told her that he had been greatly concerned at the impertinence which the young lady under her protection had ſuffered from Mr. Lovel; but that he had the pleaſure of aſſuring her, ſhe had no future diſturbance to apprehend from him.

Mrs. Mirvan, with great eagerneſs, begged he would explain himſelf, and ſaid ſhe

hoped he had not thought ſo inſignificant an affair worthy his ſerious attention.

"There is nothing," anſwered he, "which requires more immediate notice than impertinence, for it ever encroaches when it is tolerated." He then added, that he believed he ought to apologize for the liberty he had taken of interfering, but that, as he regarded himſelf in the light of a *party concerned*, from having had the honour of dancing with Miſs Anville, he could not poſſibly reconcile to himſelf a patient neutrality.

He then proceeded to tell her, that he had waited upon Mr. Lovel the morning after the play; that the viſit had proved an amicable one, but the particulars were neither entertaining nor neceſſary; he only aſſured her, Miſs Anville might be perfectly eaſy, ſince Mr. Lovel had engaged his honour never more to mention, or even to hint at what had paſſed at Mrs. Stanley's aſſembly.

Mrs. Mirvan expreſſed her ſatisfaction at this concluſion, and thanked him for his polite attention to her young friend.

"It would be needleſs," ſaid he, "to requeſt that this affair may never tranſpire, ſince Mrs. Mirvan cannot but ſee the neceſſity of keeping it inviolably ſecret; but I thought

thought it incumbent upon me, as the young lady is under your protection, to aſſure both you and her of Mr. Lovel's future reſpect."

Had I known of this viſit previous to Lord Orville's making it, what dreadful uneaſineſs would it have coſt me! Yet that he ſhould ſo much intereſt himſelf in ſecuring me from offence, gives me, I muſt own, an internal pleaſure, greater than I can expreſs; for I feared he had too contemptuous an opinion of me, to take any trouble upon my account. Though, after all, this interference might rather be to ſatisfy his own delicacy, than from thinking well of me.

But how cool, how quiet is true courage! Who, from ſeeing Lord Orville at the play, would have imagined his reſentment would have hazarded his life? yet his diſpleaſure was evident, though his real bravery and his politeneſs equally guarded him from entering into any diſcuſſion in our preſence.

Madame Duval, as I expected, was moſt terribly angry yeſterday; ſhe ſcolded me for I believe two hours, on account of having left her, and proteſted ſhe had been ſo much ſurpriſed at my going, without giving her time to anſwer, that ſhe hardly knew whether ſhe was awake or aſleep. But ſhe

aſſured me, that if ever I did ſo again, ſhe would never more take me into public. And ſhe expreſſed an equal degree of diſpleaſure againſt Sir Clement, becauſe he had not even ſpoken to her, and becauſe he was always of the Captain's ſide in an argument. The Captain, as bound in honour, warmly defended him, and then followed a diſpute in the uſual ſtyle.

After dinner, Mrs. Mirvan introduced the ſubject of our leaving London. Madame Duval ſaid ſhe ſhould ſtay a month or two longer. The Captain told her ſhe was welcome, but that he and his family ſhould go into the country on Tueſday morning.

A moſt diſagreeable ſcene followed; Madame Duval inſiſted upon keeping me with her; but Mrs. Mirvan ſaid, that as I was actually engaged on a viſit to Lady Howard, who had only conſented to my leaving her for a few days, ſhe could not think of returning without me.

Perhaps if the Captain had not interfered, the good-breeding and mildneſs of Mrs. Mirvan might have had ſome effect upon Madame Duval; but he paſſes no opportunity of provoking her, and therefore made ſo many groſs and rude ſpeeches, all of which ſhe retorted, that, in concluſion, ſhe vowed ſhe would ſooner go to law, in right

right of her relationſhip, than that I ſhould be taken away from her.

I heard this account from Mrs. Mirvan, who was ſo kindly conſiderate as to give me a pretence for quitting the room, as ſoon as this diſpute began, leſt Madame Duval ſhould refer to me, and inſiſt on my obedience.

The final reſult of the converſation was, that, to ſoften matters for the preſent, Madame Duval ſhould make one in the party for Howard Grove, whither we are poſitively to go next Wedneſday. And though we are none of us ſatisfied with this plan, we know not how to form a better.

Mrs. Mirvan is now writing to Lady Howard, to excuſe bringing this unexpected gueſt, and to prevent the diſagreeable ſurpriſe, which muſt, otherwiſe, attend her reception. This dear lady ſeems eternally ſtudying my happineſs and advantage.

To-night we go to the Pantheon, which is the laſt diverſion we ſhall partake of in London, for to-morrow——

* * * * *

This moment, my deareſt Sir, I have received your kind letter.

If you thought us too diſſipated the firſt week, I almoſt fear to know what you will think of us this ſecond;—however, the

Pantheon this evening will probably be the laſt public place which I ſhall ever ſee.

The aſſurance of your ſupport and protection in regard to Madame Duval, though what I never doubted, excites my utmoſt gratitude: how, indeed, cheriſhed under your roof, the happy object of your conſtant indulgence, how could I have borne to become the ſlave of her tyrannical humours?—pardon me that I ſpeak ſo hardly of her; but, whenever the idea of paſſing my days with her occurs to me, the compariſon which naturally follows, takes from me all that forbearance, which, I believe, I owe her.

You are already diſpleaſed with Sir Clement: to be ſure, then, his behaviour after the Opera will not make his peace with you. Indeed, the more I reflect upon it, the more angry I am. I was entirely in his power, and it was cruel in him to cauſe me ſo much terror.

O my deareſt Sir, were I but worthy the prayers and the wiſhes you offer for me, the utmoſt ambition of my heart would be fully ſatisfied! but I greatly fear you will find me, now that I am out of the reach of your aſſiſting prudence, more weak and imperfect than you could have expected.

I have not now time to write another word,

word, for I muſt immediately haſten to dreſs for the evening.

LETTER XXIII.

Evelina in continuation.

Queen-Ann-ſtreet, Tueſday, April 19.

THERE is ſomething to me half melancholy in writing an account of our laſt adventures in London; however, as this day is merely appropriated to packing, and preparations for our journey, and as I ſhall ſhortly have no more adventures to write, I think I may as well complete my town journal at once. And, when you have it all together, I hope, my dear Sir, you will ſend me your obſervations and thoughts upon it to Howard Grove.

About eight o'clock we went to the Pantheon. I was extremely ſtruck with the beauty of the building, which greatly ſurpaſſed whatever I could have expected or imagined. Yet, it has more the appearance of a chapel, than of a place of diverſion; and, though I was quite charmed with the magnificence of the room, I felt that I could not be as gay and thoughtleſs there as at Ranelagh, for there is ſomething in it which

which rather inſpires awe and ſolemnity, than mirth and pleaſure. However, perhaps it may only have this effect upon ſuch a novice as myſelf.

I ſhould have ſaid, that our party conſiſted only of Captain, Mrs. and Miſs Mirvan, as Madame Duval ſpent the day in the city:—which I own I could not lament.

There was a great deal of company; but the firſt perſon we ſaw was Sir Clement Willoughby. He addreſſed us with his uſual eaſe, and joined us for the whole evening. I felt myſelf very uneaſy in his preſence; for I could not look at him, nor hear him ſpeak, without recollecting the chariot adventure; but to my great amazement, I obſerved that he looked at *me* without the leaſt apparent diſcompoſure, though certainly he ought not to think of his behaviour without bluſhing. I really wiſh I had not forgiven him, and then he could not have ventured to ſpeak to me any more.

There was an exceeding good concert, but too much talking to hear it well. Indeed I am quite aſtoniſhed to find how little muſic is attended to in ſilence; for though every body ſeems to admire, hardly any body liſtens.

We did not ſee Lord Orville, till we went into the tea-room, which is large, low,

low, and under ground, and ſerves merely as a foil to the apartments above; he then ſat next to us; he ſeemed to belong to a large party, chiefly of ladies; but, among the gentlemen attending them, I perceived Mr. Lovel.

I was extremely irreſolute whether or not I ought to make any acknowledgments to Lord Orville for his generous conduct in ſecuring me from the future impertinence of that man; and I thought, that as he had ſeemed to allow Mrs Mirvan to acquaint me, though no one elſe, of the meaſures which he had taken, he might, perhaps, ſuppoſe me ungrateful if ſilent: however, I might have ſpared myſelf the trouble of deliberating, as I never once had the ſhadow of an opportunity of ſpeaking unheard by Sir Clement. On the contrary, he was ſo exceedingly officious and forward, that I could not ſay a word to any body, but inſtantly he bent his head forward, with an air of profound attention, as if I had addreſſed myſelf wholly to him: and yet, I never once looked at him, and would not have ſpoken to him on any account.

Indeed, Mrs. Mirvan, herſelf, though unacquainted with the behaviour of Sir Clement after the opera, ſays it is not right for a young woman to be ſeen ſo frequently in public with the ſame gentleman; and, if

our

our ſtay in town was to be lengthened, ſhe would endeavour to repreſent to the Captain the impropriety of allowing his conſtant attendance; for Sir Clement with all his *eaſineſs*, could not be ſo eternally of our parties, if the Captain was leſs fond of his company.

At the ſame table with Lord Orville, ſat a gentleman,—I call him ſo only becauſe he *was* at the ſame table,—who, almoſt from the moment I was ſeated, fixed his eyes ſtedfaſtly on my face, and never once removed them to any other object during tea-time, notwithſtanding my diſlike of his ſtaring, muſt, I am ſure, have been very evident. I was quite ſurpriſed, that a man whoſe boldneſs was ſo offenſive, could have gained admiſſion into a party of which Lord Orville made one; for I naturally concluded him to be ſome low-bred, and uneducated man; and I thought my idea was indubitably confirmed, when I heard him ſay to Sir Clement Willoughby, in an *audible whiſper*,—which is a mode of ſpeech very diſtreſſing and diſagreeable to by-ſtanders,—"For Heaven's ſake, Willoughby, who is that lovely creature?"

But what was my amazement, when, liſtening attentively for the anſwer, though my head was turned another way, I heard Sir Clement ſay, "I am ſorry I cannot inform

form your Lordſhip, but I am ignorant myſelf."

Lordſhip! — how extraordinary! that a *nobleman*, accuſtomed, in all probability, to the firſt rank of company in the kingdom, from his earlieſt infancy, can poſſibly be deficient in *good manners*, however faulty in morals and principles! Even Sir Clement Willoughby appeared modeſt in compariſon with this perſon.

During tea, a converſation was commenced upon the times, faſhions, and public places, in which the company of both tables joined. It began by Sir Clement's enquiring of Miſs Mirvan, and of me, if the Pantheon had anſwered our expectations.

We both readily agreed that it had greatly exceeded them.

"Ay, to be ſure," ſaid the Captain, "why you don't ſuppoſe they'd confeſs they did n't like it, do you? Whatever's the faſhion, they muſt like of courſe;—or elſe I'd be bound for it they'd own, that there never was ſuch a dull place as this here invented."

"And has, then, this building," ſaid Lord Orville, "no merit that may ſerve to leſſen your cenſure? Will not your eye, Sir, ſpeak ſomething in its favour?"

"Eye!" cried the Lord, (I don't know his name,) "and is there any eye here, that can

can find pleaſure in looking at dead walls or ſtatues, when ſuch heavenly living objects as I now ſee demand all their admiration?"

"O, certainly," ſaid Lord Orville, "the lifeleſs ſymmetry of architecture, however beautiful the deſign and proportion, no man would be ſo mad as to put in competition with the animated charms of nature: but when, as to-night, the eye may be regaled at the ſame time, and in one view, with all the excellence of art, and all the perfection of nature, I cannot think that either ſuffer by being ſeen together."

"I grant, my Lord," ſaid Sir Clement, "that the cool eye of unimpaſſioned philoſophy may view both with equal attention, and equal ſafety; but, where the heart is not ſo well guarded, it is apt to interfere, and render, even to the eye, all objects but one inſipid and unintereſting."

"Aye, aye," cried the Captain, "you may talk what you will of your eye here, and your eye there, and, for the matter of that, to be ſure you have two,—but we all know they both ſquint one way."

"Far be it from me," ſaid Lord Orville, "to diſpute the *magnetic* power of beauty, which irreſiſtibly draws and attracts whatever has ſoul and ſympathy: and I am happy to acknowledge, that though we have now no

no *gods* to occupy a manſion profeſſedly built for them, yet we have ſecured their *better halves*, for we have *goddeſſes* to whom we all moſt willingly bow down." And then, with a very droll air, he made a profound reverence to the ladies.

"They'd need be goddeſſes with a vengeance," ſaid the Captain, "for they're mortal dear to look at. Howſomever, I ſhould be glad to know what you can ſee in e'er a face among them that's worth half a guinea for a ſight."

"Half a guinea!" exclaimed that ſame Lord, "I would give half I am worth, for a ſight of only *one*, provided I make my own choice. And, prithee, how can money be better employed than in the ſervice of fine women."

"If the ladies of his own party can pardon the Captain's ſpeech," ſaid Sir Clement, "I think he has a fair claim to the forgiveneſs of all."

"Then you depend very much, as I doubt not but you may," ſaid Lord Orville, "upon the general ſweetneſs of the ſex;—but, as to the ladies of the Captain's party, they may eaſily pardon, for they cannot be hurt."

"But they muſt have a deviliſh good conceit of themſelves, though," ſaid the Captain, "to believe all that. Howſomever,

ever, whether or no, I ſhould be glad to be told, by ſome of you, who ſeem to be knowing in them things, what kind of diverſion can be found in ſuch a place as this here, for one who has had, long ago, his full of face-hunting?"

Every body laughed, but nobody ſpoke.

"Why, look you there, now," continued the Captain, "you're all at a dead ſtand!—not a man among you can anſwer that there queſtion. Why, then, I muſt make bold to conclude, that you all come here for no manner of purpoſe but to ſtare at one another's pretty faces;—though, for the matter of that, half of 'em are plaguy ugly,—and, as to t'other half,—I believe it's none of God's manufactory."

"What the ladies may come hither for, Sir," ſaid Mr. Lovel, (ſtroking his ruffles, and looking down,) "it would ill become *us* to determine; but as to we men, doubtleſs we can have no other view, than to admire them."

"If I be n't miſtaken," cried the Captain (looking earneſtly in his face,) "you are that ſame perſon we ſaw at Love for Love t'other night; be n't you?

Mr. Lovel bowed.

"Why, then, Gentlemen," continued he, with a loud laugh, "I muſt tell you a moſt excellent good joke;—when all was over, as

as ſure as you're alive, he aſked what the play was! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sir," ſaid Mr. Lovel, colouring, "if you were as much uſed to a town life as I am,—which, I preſume, is not preciſely the caſe,—I fancy you would not find ſo much diverſion from a circumſtance ſo common."

"Common! what, is it common?" repeated the Captain; "why then, 'fore George, ſuch chaps are more fit to be ſent to ſchool, and well-diſciplined with a cat o' nine tails, than to poke their heads into a play-houſe. Why, a play is the only thing left, now-a-days, that has a grain of ſenſe in it; for as to all the reſt of your public places, d'ye ſee, if they were all put together, I would n't give *that* for 'em!" ſnapping his fingers. "And now we're talking of them ſort of things, there's your operas,—I ſhould like to know, now, what any of you can find to ſay for them."

Lord Orville, who was moſt able to have anſwered, ſeemed by no means to think the Captain worthy an argument, upon a ſubject concerning which he had neither knowledge nor feeling: but, turning to us, he ſaid, "The ladies are ſilent, and we ſeem to have engroſſed the converſation to ourſelves, in which we are much more our own enemies than theirs. But," addreſſing himſelf to Miſs Mirvan and me, "I am

moſt

moſt deſirous to hear the opinions of theſe young ladies, to whom all public places muſt, as yet, be new."

We both, and with eagerneſs, declared that we had received as much, if not more pleaſure, at the opera than any where: but we had better have been ſilent; for the Captain, quite diſpleaſed, ſaid, "What ſignifies aſking them girls? Do you think they know their own minds yet? Aſk 'em after any thing that's called diverſion, and you're ſure they'll ſay it's vaſtly fine;—they are a ſet of parrots, and ſpeak by rote, for they all ſay the ſame thing: but aſk 'em how they like making puddings and pies, and I'll warrant you'll poſe 'em. As to them operas, I deſire I may hear no more of their liking ſuch nonſenſe; and for you, Moll," to his daughter, "I charge you, as you value my favour, that you'll never again be ſo impertinent as to have a taſte of your own before my face. There are fools enough in the world, without your adding to their number. I'll have no daughter of mine affect them ſort of megrims. It is a ſhame they a'n't put down; and if I'd my will, there's not a magiſtrate in this town, but ſhould be knocked of the head for ſuffering them. If you've a mind to praiſe any thing, why you may praiſe a play, and welcome, for I like it myſelf."

This

This reproof effectually ſilenced us both for the reſt of the evening. Nay, indeed, for ſome minutes it ſeemed to ſilence every body elſe; till Mr. Lovel, not willing to loſe an opportunity of returning the Captain's ſarcaſm, ſaid, "Why, really Sir, it is but natural to be moſt pleaſed with what is moſt familiar, and, I think, of all our diverſions, there is not one ſo much in common between us and the country, as a play. Not a village but has its barns and comedians; and as for the ſtage buſineſs, why it may be pretty equally done any where; and even in regard to *us*, and the *canaille*, confined as we all are within the ſemi-circle of a theatre, there is no place where the diſtinction is leſs obvious."

While the Captain ſeemed conſidering for Mr. Lovel's meaning, Lord Orville, probably with a view to prevent his finding it, changed the ſubject to Cox's Muſeum, and aſked what he thought of it?

"Think!—" ſaid he, "why I think as how it i'n't worth thinking about. I like no ſuch *jem cracks*. It is only fit, in my mind, for monkeys,—though, for aught I know, they too might turn up their noſes at it."

"May we aſk your Lordſhip's own opinion?" ſaid Mrs. Mirvan.

"The mechaniſm," anſwered he, "is wonderfully

wonderfully ingenious: I am ſorry it is turned to no better account; but its purport is ſo frivolous, ſo very remote from all aim at inſtruction or utility, that the ſight of ſo fine a ſhew, only leaves a regret on the mind, that ſo much work, and ſo much ingenuity, ſhould not be better beſtowed."

"The truth is," ſaid the Captain, "that in all this huge town, ſo full as it is of folks of all ſorts, there i'n't ſo much as one public place, beſides the play-houſe, where a man, that's to ſay, a man who *is* a man, ought not to be aſhamed to ſhew his face. T'other day they got me to a ridotto; but I believe it will be long enough before they get me to another. I knew no more what to do with myſelf, than if my ſhip's company had been metamorphoſed into Frenchmen. Then, again, there's your famous Ranelagh, that you make ſuch a fuſs about, —why what a dull place is that!—it's the worſt of all."

"Ranelagh dull!"—"Ranelagh dull!" was echoed from mouth to mouth, and all the ladies, as if of one accord, regarded the Captain with looks of the moſt ironical contempt.

"As to Ranelagh," ſaid Mr. Lovel, "moſt indubitably, though the price is plebeian, it is by no means adapted to the plebeian taſte. It requires a certain acquaintance

ance with high life, and—and—and ſomething of—of—ſomething *d'un vrai goût*, to be really ſenſible of its merit. Thoſe whoſe —whoſe connections, and ſo forth, are not among *les gens comme il faut*, can feel nothing but *ennui* at ſuch a place as Ranelagh."

"Ranelagh!" cried Lord ——, "O, 'tis the divineſt place under heaven,—or, indeed,—for aught I know——"

"O you creature!" cried a pretty, but affected young lady, patting him with her fan, "you ſha'n't talk ſo; I know what you are going to ſay; but, poſitively, I won't ſit by you, if you're ſo wicked."

"And how can one ſit by you, and be good?" ſaid he, "when only to look at you is enough to make one wicked—or wiſh to be ſo?"

"Fie, my Lord!" returned ſhe, "you are really inſufferable. I don't think I ſhall ſpeak to you again theſe ſeven years."

"What a metamorphoſis," cried Lord Orville, "ſhould you make a patriarch of his Lordſhip!"

"Seven years!" ſaid he, "dear Madam, be contented with telling me you will not ſpeak to me *after* ſeven years, and I will endeavour to ſubmit."

"O, very well, my Lord," anſwered ſhe, "pray date the end of our ſpeaking

to each other as early as you pleaſe, I'll promiſe to agree to your time."

"You know, dear Madam," ſaid he, ſipping his tea, "you know I only live in your ſight."

"O yes, my Lord, I have long known that. But I begin to fear we ſhall be too late for Ranelagh this evening."

"O no, Madam," ſaid Mr. Lovel, looking at his watch, "it is but juſt paſt ten."

"No more!" cried ſhe; "O then we ſhall do very well."

All the ladies now ſtarted up, and declared they had no time to loſe.

"Why what the D—l," cried the Captain, leaning forward with both his arms on the table, "are you going to Ranelagh at this time of night?"

The ladies looked at one another, and ſmiled.

"To Ranelagh?" cried Lord ——. "Yes, and I hope you are going too; for we cannot poſſibly excuſe theſe ladies."

"I go to Ranelagh?—if I do, I'll be ——."

Every body now ſtood up, and the ſtranger Lord, coming round to me, ſaid, "*You* go, I hope?"

"No, my Lord, I believe not."

"O you cannot, muſt not be ſo barbarous." And he took my hand, and ran on

ſaying

ſaying ſuch fine ſpeeches and compliments, that I might almoſt have ſuppoſed myſelf a goddeſs, and him a pagan, paying me adoration. As ſoon as I poſſibly could, I drew back my hand; but he frequently, in the courſe of converſation, contrived to take it again, though it was extremely diſagreeable to me; and the more ſo, as I ſaw that Lord Orville had his eyes fixed upon us, with a gravity of attention that made me uneaſy.

And, ſurely, my dear Sir, it was a great liberty in this Lord, notwithſtanding his rank, to treat me ſo freely. As to Sir Clement, he ſeemed in miſery.

They all endeavoured to prevail with the Captain to join the Ranelagh party; and this Lord told me, in a low voice, that *it was tearing his heart out* to go without me.

During this converſation, Mr. Lovel came forward, and aſſuming a look of ſurpriſe, made me a bow, and enquired how I did, proteſting, upon his honour, that he had not ſeen me before, or would ſooner have paid his reſpects to me.

Though his politeneſs was evidently conſtrained, yet I was very glad to be thus aſſured of having nothing more to fear from him.

The Captain, far from liſtening to their perſuaſions of accompanying them to Ranelagh, was quite in a paſſion at the pro-

poſal, and vowed he would ſooner go to the *Black-hole in Calcutta.*

"But," ſaid Lord ——, "if the *ladies* will take their tea at Ranelagh, you may depend upon our ſeeing them ſafe home, for we ſhall all be proud of the honour of attending them."

"May be ſo," ſaid the Captain; "but I'll tell you what, if one of theſe places be n't enough for them to-night, why to-morrow they ſhall go to ne'er a one."

We inſtantly declared ourſelves very ready to go home.

"It is not for yourſelves that we petition," ſaid Lord ——, "but for *us*; if you have any charity, you will not be ſo cruel as to deny us; we only beg you to prolong our happineſs for a few minutes,—the favour is but a ſmall one for you to grant, though ſo great a one for us to receive."

"To tell you a piece of my mind," ſaid the Captain, ſurlily, "I think you might as well not give the girls ſo much of this palaver: they'll take it all for goſpel. As to Moll, why ſhe's well enough, but nothing extraordinary, though, perhaps, you may perſuade her that her pug-noſe is all the faſhion: and as to the other, why ſhe's good white and red to be ſure; but what

of that?—I'll warrant ſhe'll moulder away as faſt as her neighbours."

"Is there," cried Lord ——, "another man in this place, who, ſeeing ſuch objects, could make ſuch a ſpeech?"

"As to that there," returned the Captain, "I don't know whether there be or no, and, to make free, I don't care; for I ſha'n't go for to model myſelf by any of theſe fair-weather chaps, who dare not ſo much as ſay their ſouls are their own,—and, for aught I know, no more they ben't. I'm almoſt as much aſhamed of my countrymen, as if I was a Frenchman, and I believe in my heart there i'n't a pin to chuſe between them; and, before long, we ſhall hear the very ſailors talking that lingo, and ſee never a ſwabber without a bag and a ſword."

"He, he, he!—well, 'pon honour," cried Mr. Lovel, "you gentlemen of the ocean have a moſt ſevere way of judging."

"Severe! 'fore George, that is impoſſible; for, to cut the matter ſhort, the men, as they call themſelves, are no better than monkeys; and as to the women, why they are mere dolls. So, now you've got my opinion of this ſubject; and ſo I wiſh you good night."

The ladies, who were very impatient to be gone, made their courtſies, and tripped

away, followed by all the gentlemen of their party, except the Lord I have before mentioned, and Lord Orville, who ſtayed to make enquiries of Mrs. Mirvan concerning our leaving town; and then ſaying, with his uſual politeneſs, ſomething civil to each of us, with a very grave air, he quitted us.

Lord —— remained ſome minutes longer, which he ſpent in making a profuſion of compliments to me, by which he prevented my hearing diſtinctly what Lord Orville ſaid, to my great vexation, eſpecially as he looked—I thought ſo, at leaſt,—as if diſpleaſed at his particularity of behaviour to me.

In going to an outward room, to wait for the carriage, I walked, and could not poſſibly avoid it, between this nobleman and Sir Clement Willoughby; and, when the ſervant ſaid the coach ſtopped the way, though the latter offered me his hand, which I ſhould much have preferred, this ſame Lord, without any ceremony, took mine himſelf; and Sir Clement, with a look extremely provoked, conducted Mrs. Mirvan.

In all ranks and all ſtations of life, how ſtrangely do characters and manners differ! Lord Orville, with a politeneſs which knows no intermiſſion, and makes no diſtinction, is as unaſſuming and modeſt, as if he had never

mixed

mixed with the great, and was totally ignorant of every qualification he poſſeſſes; this other Lord, though laviſh of compliments and fine ſpeeches, ſeems to me an entire ſtranger to real good-breeding; whoever ſtrikes his fancy, engroſſes his whole attention. He is forward and bold, has an air of haughtineſs towards men, and a look of libertiniſm towards women, and his conſcious quality ſeems to have given him a freedom in his way of ſpeaking to either ſex, that is very little ſhort of rudeneſs.

When we returned home, we were all low-ſpirited; the evening's entertainment had diſpleaſed the Captain, and his diſpleaſure, I believe, diſconcerted us all.

And here I thought to have concluded my letter; but, to my great ſurpriſe, juſt now we had a viſit from Lord Orville. He called, he ſaid, to pay his reſpects to us before we left town, and made many enquiries concerning our return; and, when Mrs. Mirvan told him we were going into the country without any view of again quitting it, he expreſſed his concern in ſuch terms—ſo polite, ſo flattering, ſo ſerious—that I could hardly forbear being ſorry myſelf. Were I to go immediately to Berry Hill, I am ſure I ſhould feel nothing but joy;—but, now we are joined by this Captain, and by Madame Duval, I muſt own

I expect very little pleaſure at Howard Grove.

Before Lord Orville went, Sir Clement Willoughby called. He was more grave than I had ever ſeen him, and made ſeveral attempts to ſpeak to me in a low voice, and to aſſure me that his regret upon the occaſion of our journey, was entirely upon my account. But I was not in ſpirits, and could not bear to be teazed by him. However, he has ſo well paid his court to Captain Mirvan, that he gave him a very hearty invitation to the Grove. At this, he brightened,—and, juſt then, Lord Orville took leave.

No doubt but he was diſguſted at this ill-timed, ill-bred partiality; for ſurely it was very wrong to make an invitation before Lord Orville, in which he was not included! I was ſo much chagrined, that, as ſoon as he went, I left the room; and I ſhall not go down ſtairs till Sir Clement is gone.

Lord Orville cannot but obſerve his aſſiduous endeavours to ingratiate himſelf into my favour; and does not this extravagant civility of Captain Mirvan, give him reaſon to ſuppoſe, that it meets with our general approbation? I cannot think upon this ſubject, without inexpreſſible uneaſineſs;—and yet, I can think of nothing elſe.

Adieu,

Adieu, my deareſt Sir. Pray write to me immediately. How many long letters has this one ſhort fortnight produced! More than I may, probably, ever write again: I fear I ſhall have tired you with reading them; but you will now have time to reſt, for I ſhall find but little to ſay in future.

And now, moſt honoured Sir, with all the follies and imperfections which I have thus faithfully recounted, can you, and with unabated kindneſs, ſuffer me to ſign myſelf

Your dutiful,
and moſt affectionate
EVELINA?

LETTER XXIV.

Mr. Villars to Evelina.

Berry Hill, April 22.

HOW much do I rejoice that I can again addreſs my letters to Howard Grove! My Evelina would have grieved had ſhe known the anxiety of my mind, during her reſidence in the great world. My apprehenſions have been inexpreſſibly alarming; and your journal, at once exciting and relieving my fears, has almoſt

wholly occupied me, ſince the time of your dating it from London.

Sir Clement Willoughby muſt be an artful deſigning man; I am extremely irritated at his conduct. The paſſion he pretends for you has neither ſincerity nor honour; the manner and the opportunities he has choſen to declare it, are bordering upon inſult.

His unworthy behaviour after the opera, convinces me, that, had not your vehemence frightened him, Queen-Ann-ſtreet would have been the laſt place whither he would have ordered his chariot. O my child, how thankful am I for your eſcape! I need not now, I am ſure, enlarge upon your indiſcretion and want of thought, in ſo haſtily truſting yourſelf with a man ſo little known to you, and whoſe gaiety and flightineſs ſhould have put you on your guard.

The nobleman you met at the Pantheon, bold and forward as you deſcribe him to be, gives me no apprehenſion; a man who appears ſo openly licentious, and who makes his attack with ſo little regard to decorum, is one who, to a mind ſuch as my Evelina's, can never be ſeen but with the diſguſt which his manners ought to excite.

But Sir Clement, though he ſeeks occaſion to give real offence, contrives to avoid all appearance of intentional evil. He is far more dangerous, becauſe more artful;

but

but I am happy to obſerve, that he ſeems to have made no impreſſion upon your heart, and therefore a very little care and prudence may ſecure you from thoſe deſigns which I fear he has formed.

Lord Orville appears to be of a better order of beings. His ſpirited conduct to the meanly impertinent Lovel, and his anxiety for you after the opera, prove him to be a man of ſenſe and of feeling. Doubtleſs, he thought there was much reaſon to tremble for your ſafety, while expoſed to the power of Sir Clement; and he acted with a regard to real honour, that will always incline me to think well of him, in ſo immediately acquainting the Mirvan family with your ſituation. Many men of this age, from a falſe and pretended delicacy to a friend, would have quietly purſued their own affairs, and thought it more honourable to leave an unſuſpecting young creature to the mercy of a libertine, than to riſk his diſpleaſure by taking meaſures for her ſecurity.

Your evident concern at leaving London, is very natural; and yet it afflicts me. I ever dreaded your being too much pleaſed with a life of diſſipation, which youth and vivacity render but too alluring; and I almoſt regret the conſent for your journey, which I had not the reſolution to withhold.

Alas, my child, the artleſſneſs of your nature, and the ſimplicity of your education, alike unfit you for the thorny paths of the great and buſy world. The ſuppoſed obſcurity of your birth and ſituation, makes you liable to a thouſand diſagreeable adventures. Not only my views, but my hopes for your future life, have ever centered in the country. Shall I own to you, that, however I may differ from Captain Mirvan in other reſpects, yet my opinion of the town, its manners, inhabitants, and diverſions, is much upon a level with his own? Indeed it is the general harbour of fraud and of folly, of duplicity and of impertinence; and I wiſh few things more fervently, than that you may have taken a laſting leave of it.

Remember, however, that I only ſpeak in regard to a public and diſſipated life; in private families, we may doubtleſs find as much goodneſs, honeſty, and virtue, in London as in the country.

If contented with a retired ſtation, I ſtill hope I ſhall live to ſee my Evelina the ornament of her neighbourhood, and the pride and delight of her family: giving and receiving joy from ſuch ſociety as may beſt deſerve her affection, and employing herſelf in ſuch uſeful and innocent occupations as may ſecure and merit the tendereſt love

love of her friends, and the worthieſt ſatiſfaction of her own heart.

Such are my hopes, and ſuch have been my expectations. Diſappoint them not, my beloved child, but chear me with a few lines, that may aſſure me, this one ſhort fortnight ſpent in town, has not undone the work of ſeventeen years ſpent in the country.

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXV.

Evelina to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove, April 25.

NO, my dear Sir, no; *the work of ſeventeen years* remains ſuch as it was, ever unworthy your time and your labour, but not more ſo now,—at leaſt I hope not,—than before that fortnight which has ſo much alarmed you.

And yet, I muſt confeſs, that I am not half ſo happy here at preſent, as I was ere I went to town: but the change is in the place, not in me. Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval have ruined Howard Grove. The harmony that reigned here, is diſturbed, our ſchemes are broken, our way of life is altered, and our comfort is deſtroyed.

But

But do not ſuppoſe *London* to be the ſource of theſe evils; for, had our excurſion been any where elſe, ſo diſagreeable an addition to our houſhold, muſt have cauſed the ſame change at our return.

I was ſure you would be diſpleaſed with Sir Clement Willoughby, and therefore I am by no means ſurpriſed at what you ſay of him: but for Lord Orville—I muſt own I had greatly feared, that my weak and imperfect account would not have procured him the good opinion which he ſo well deſerves, and which I am delighted to find you ſeem to have of him. O Sir, could I have done juſtice to the merit of which I believe him poſſeſſed;—could I have painted him to *you* ſuch as he appeared to *me*,—then, indeed, you would have had ſome idea of the claim which he has to your approbation!

After the laſt letter which I wrote in town, nothing more paſſed previous to our journey hither, except a very violent quarrel between Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval. As the Captain intended to travel on horſeback, he had ſettled that we four females ſhould make uſe of his coach. Madame Duval did not come to Queen-Ann-ſtreet, till the carriage had waited ſome time at the door, and then, attended by Monſieur

Monſieur Du Bois, ſhe made her appearance.

The Captain, impatient to be gone, would not ſuffer them to enter the houſe, but inſiſted that we ſhould immediately get into the coach. We obeyed; but were no ſooner ſeated, than Madame Duval ſaid, "Come, Monſieur Du Bois, theſe girls can make very good room for you; ſit cloſer, children."

Mrs. Mirvan looked quite confounded, and M. Du Bois, after making ſome apologies about crowding us, actually got into the coach, on the ſide with Miſs Mirvan and me. But no ſooner was he ſeated, than the Captain, who had obſerved this tranſaction very quietly, walked up to the coach-door, ſaying, "What, neither with your leave, nor by your leave?"

M. Du Bois ſeemed rather ſhocked, and began to make abundance of excuſes; but the Captain neither underſtood nor regarded him, and, very roughly, ſaid, "Look'ee, *Monſeer*, this here may be a French faſhion, for aught I know;—but Give and Take is fair in all nations; and ſo now, d'ye ſee, I'll make bold to ſhew you an Engliſh one."

And then, ſeizing his wriſt, he made him jump out of the coach.

M. Du Bois inſtantly put his hand upon his

his ſword, and threatened to reſent this indignity. The Captain, holding up his ſtick, bid him draw at his peril. Mrs. Mirvan, greatly alarmed, got out of the coach, and, ſtanding between them, entreated her huſband to re-enter the houſe.

"None of your clack!" cried he, angrily, "what the D—l, do you ſuppoſe I can't manage a Frenchman?"

Mean time, Madame Duval called out to M. Du Bois, "*Eh, laiſſez-le, mon ami, ne le corrigez pas; c'eſt un vilain bête qui n'en vaut pas la peine.*"

"*Monſieur le Capitaine,*" cried M. Du Bois, "*voulez-vous bien me demander pardon?*"

"O ho, you demand pardon, do you?" ſaid the Captain, "I thought as much; I thought you'd come to;—ſo you have loſt your reliſh for an Engliſh ſalutation, have you?" ſtrutting up to him with looks of defiance.

A crowd was now gathering, and Mrs. Mirvan again beſought her huſband to go into the houſe.

"Why what a plague is the woman afraid of?—did you ever know a Frenchman that could not take an affront?—I warrant, *Monſeer* knows what he is about;—don't you, *Monſeer?*"

M. Du Bois, not underſtanding him, only ſaid, "*plait-il, Monſieur?*"

"No,

"No, nor *diſh* me, neither," anſwered the Captain; "but be that as it may, what ſignifies our parleying here? If you've any thing to propoſe, ſpeak at once; if not, why let us go on our journey without more ado."

"*Parbleu, je n'entends rien, moi!*" cried M. Du Bois, ſhrugging his ſhoulders, and looking very diſmal.

Mrs. Mirvan then advanced to him, and ſaid, in French, that ſhe was ſure the Captain had not any intention to affront him, and begged he would deſiſt from a diſpute which could only be productive of mutual miſunderſtanding, as neither of them knew the language of the other.

This ſenſible remonſtrance had the deſired effect, and M. Du Bois, making a bow to every one, except the Captain, very wiſely gave up the point, and took leave.

We then hoped to proceed quietly on our journey; but the turbulent Captain would not yet permit us: he approached Madame Duval with an exulting air, and ſaid, "Why how's this, Madam? what, has your champion deſerted you? why I thought you told me, that you old gentlewomen had it all your own way, among them French ſparks?"

"As to that, Sir," anſwered ſhe, "it's not of no conſequence what you thought; for

for a perſon who can behave in ſuch a low way, may think what he pleaſes for me, for I ſha'n't mind.

"Why, then, Miſtreſs, ſince you muſt needs make ſo free," cried he, "pleaſe to tell me the reaſon why you took the liberty for to aſk any of your followers into my coach, without my leave? Anſwer me to that."

"Why then, pray, Sir," returned ſhe, "tell me the reaſon why you took the liberty to treat the gentleman in ſuch a unpolite way, as to take and pull him neck and heels out? I'm ſure he had n't done nothing to affront you, nor nobody elſe; and I don't know what great hurt he would have done you, by juſt ſitting ſtill in the coach; he would not have eat it."

"What, do you think, then, that my horſes have nothing to do, but to carry about your ſnivelling Frenchmen? If you do, Madam, I muſt make bold to tell you, you are out, for I'll ſee 'em hanged firſt."

"More brute you, then! for they've never carried nobody half ſo good."

"Why, look'ee, Madam, if you muſt needs provoke me, I'll tell you a piece of my mind; you muſt know, I can ſee as far into a mill-ſtone as another man; and ſo, if you thought for to fobb me off with one of your ſmirking French puppies for a ſon-in-law,

in-law, why you'll find yourſelf in a hobble, —that's all."

"Sir, you're a —— but I won't ſay what;—but, I proteſt, I had n't no ſuch a thought, no more had n't Monſieur Du Bois."

"My dear," ſaid Mrs. Mirvan, "we ſhall be very late."

"Well, well," anſwered he, "get away then; off with you, as faſt as you can, it's high time. As to Molly, ſhe's fine lady enough in all conſcience; I want none of your French chaps to make her worſe."

And ſo ſaying, he mounted his horſe, and we drove off. And I could not but think with regret of the different feelings we experienced upon leaving London, to what had belonged to our entering it!

During the journey Madame Duval was ſo very violent againſt the Captain, that ſhe obliged Mrs. Mirvan to tell her, that, when in her preſence, ſhe muſt beg her to chuſe ſome other ſubject of diſcourſe.

We had a moſt affectionate reception from Lady Howard, whoſe kindneſs and hoſpitality cannot fail of making every body happy, who is diſpoſed ſo to be.

Adieu, my deareſt Sir. I hope, though I have hitherto neglected to mention it, that you have always remembered me to whoever has made any enquiry concerning me.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

Evelina to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove, April 27.

O MY dear Sir, I now write in the greatest uneaſineſs! Madame Duval has made a propoſal which terrifies me to death, and which was as unexpected, as it is ſhocking.

She had been employed for ſome hours this afternoon in reading letters from London, and, juſt about tea-time, ſhe ſent for me into her room, and ſaid, with a look of great ſatisfaction, "Come here, child, I've got ſome very good news to tell you: ſomething that will ſurpriſe you, I'll give you my word, for you ha'n't no notion of it."

I begged her to explain herſelf; and then, in terms which I cannot repeat, ſhe ſaid ſhe had been conſidering what a ſhame it was, to ſee me ſuch a poor country, ſhame-faced thing, when I ought to be a fine lady; and that ſhe had long, and upon ſeveral occaſions, bluſhed for me, though ſhe muſt own the fault was none of mine: for nothing better could be expected from a girl who had been ſo immured. However, ſhe aſſured me ſhe had, at length, hit upon

upon a plan, which would make quite another creature of me.

I waited, without much impatience, to hear what this preface led to; but I was ſoon awakened to more lively ſenſations, when ſhe acquainted me, that her intention was to prove my birthright, and to claim, by law, the inheritance of my real family!

It would be impoſſible for me to expreſs my extreme conſternation, when ſhe thus unfolded her ſcheme. My ſurpriſe and terror were equally great. I could ſay nothing; I heard her with a ſilence which I had not the power to break.

She then expatiated very warmly upon the advantages I ſhould reap from her plan; talked in a high ſtyle of my future grandeur; aſſured me how heartily I ſhould deſpiſe almoſt every body and every thing I had hitherto ſeen; predicted my marrying into ſome family of the firſt rank in the kingdom; and, finally, ſaid I ſhould ſpend a few months in Paris, where my education and manners might receive their laſt poliſh.

She enlarged alſo upon the delight ſhe ſhould have, in common with myſelf, from mortifying the pride of certain people, and ſhewing them, that ſhe was not to be ſlighted with impunity.

In the midſt of this diſcourſe, I was relieved by a ſummons to tea. Madame Du-

val

val was in great ſpirits; but my emotion was too painful for concealment, and every body enquired into the cauſe. I would fain have waved the ſubject, but Madame Duval was determined to make it public. She told them, that ſhe had it in her head to *make ſomething* of me, and that they ſhould ſoon call me by another name than that of Anville, and yet that ſhe was not going to have the child married, neither.

I could not endure to hear her proceed, and was going to leave the room; which, when Lady Howard perceived, ſhe begged Madame Duval would defer her intelligence to ſome other opportunity; but ſhe was ſo eager to communicate her ſcheme, that ſhe could bear no delay, and therefore they ſuffered me to go, without oppoſition. Indeed, whenever my ſituation or affairs are mentioned by Madame Duval, ſhe ſpeaks of them with ſuch bluntneſs and ſeverity, that I cannot be enjoined a taſk more cruel than to hear her.

I was afterwards acquainted with ſome particulars of the converſation by Miſs Mirvan, who told me that Madame Duval informed them of her plan with the utmoſt complacency, and ſeemed to think herſelf very fortunate in having ſuggeſted it; but ſoon after, ſhe accidentally betrayed, that ſhe had been inſtigated to the ſcheme by

her relations the Branghtons, whoſe letters, which ſhe received to-day, firſt mentioned the propoſal. She declared that ſhe would have nothing to do with any *round-about ways*, but go openly and inſtantly to law, in order to prove my birth, real name, and title to the eſtate of my anceſtors.

How impertinent and officious, in theſe Branghtons, to interfere thus in my concerns! You can hardly imagine what a diſturbance this plan has made in the family. The Captain, without enquiring into any particulars of the affair, has peremptorily declared himſelf againſt it, merely becauſe it has been propoſed by Madame Duval, and they have battled the point together with great violence. Mrs. Mirvan ſays ſhe will not even *think*, till ſhe hears your opinion. But Lady Howard, to my great ſurpriſe, openly avows her approbation of Madame Duval's intention: however, ſhe will write her reaſons and ſentiments upon the ſubject to you herſelf.

As to Miſs Mirvan, ſhe is my ſecond ſelf, and neither hopes nor fears but as I do. And as to *me*,—I know not what to ſay, nor even what to wiſh; I have often thought my fate peculiarly cruel, to have but one parent, and from that one to be baniſhed for ever;—while, on the other ſide, I have but too well known and felt the propriety

of

of the ſeparation. And yet, you may much better imagine than I can expreſs, the internal anguiſh which ſometimes oppreſſes my heart, when I reflect upon the ſtrange indifference, that muſt occaſion a father never to make the leaſt enquiry after the health, the welfare, or even the life of his child!

O Sir, to *me*, the loſs is nothing!—greatly, ſweetly, and moſt benevolently have you guarded me from feeling it;—but for *him*, I grieve indeed!—I muſt be diveſted, not merely of all filial piety, but of all humanity, could I ever think upon this ſubject, and not be wounded to the ſoul.

Again I muſt repeat, I know not what to *wiſh*: think for me, therefore, my deareſt Sir, and ſuffer my doubting mind, that knows not which way to direct its hopes, to be guided by your wiſdom and unerring counſel.

EVELINA.

LETTER XXVII.

Lady Howard to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove.

Dear Sir,

I Cannot give a greater proof of the high opinion I have of your candour, than by the liberty I am now going to take, of preſuming to offer you advice, upon a ſubject concerning which you have ſo juſt a claim to act for yourſelf: but I know you have too unaffected a love of juſtice, to be partially tenacious of your own judgment.

Madame Duval has been propoſing a ſcheme which has put us all in commotion, and againſt which, at firſt, in common with the reſt of my family, I exclaimed; but upon more mature conſideration, I own my objections have almoſt wholly vaniſhed.

This ſcheme is no other than to commence a law-ſuit with Sir John Belmont, to prove the validity of his marriage with Miſs Evelyn; the neceſſary conſequence of which proof, will be ſecuring his fortune and eſtate to his daughter.

And why, my dear Sir, ſhould not this be? I know that, upon firſt hearing, ſuch a plan conveys ideas that muſt ſhock you; but I know, too, that your mind is ſupe-

rior to being governed by prejudices, or to oppoſing any important cauſe on account of a few diſagreeable attendant circumſtances.

Your lovely charge, now firſt entering into life, has merit which ought not to be buried in obſcurity. She ſeems born for an ornament to the world. Nature has been bountiful to her of whatever ſhe had to beſtow; and the peculiar attention you have given to her education, has formed her mind to a degree of excellence, that, in one ſo young, I have ſcarce ever ſeen equalled. Fortune, alone, has hitherto been ſparing of her gifts; and ſhe, too, now opens the way which leads to all that is left to wiſh for her.

What your reaſons may have been, my good Sir, for ſo carefully concealing the birth, name, and pretenſions of this amiable girl, and forbearing to make any claim upon Sir John Belmont, I am totally a ſtranger to; but, without knowing, I reſpect them, from the high opinion I have of your character and judgment; but I hope they are not inſuperable, for I cannot but think, that it was never deſigned, for one who ſeems meant to grace the world, to have her life devoted to retirement.

Surely Sir John Belmont, wretch as he has ſhewn himſelf, could never ſee his accompliſhed daughter, and not be proud to

own her, and eager to secure her the inheritance of his fortune. The admiration she met with in town, though merely the effect of her external attractions, was such, that Mrs. Mirvan assures me, she would have had the most splendid offers, had there not seemed to be some mystery in regard to her birth, which, she was well informed, was assiduously, though vainly, endeavoured to be discovered.

Can it be right, my dear Sir, that this promising young creature should be deprived of the fortune, and rank of life, to which she is lawfully entitled, and which you have prepared her to support and to use so nobly? To despise riches, may, indeed, be philosophic, but to dispense them worthily, must, surely, be more beneficial to mankind.

Perhaps a few years, or, indeed, a much shorter time, may make this scheme impracticable. Sir John, though yet young, leads a life too dissipated for long duration; and, when too late, we may regret that something was not sooner done; for it will be next to impossible, after he is gone, to settle or prove any thing with his heirs and executors.

Pardon the earnestness with which I write my sense of this affair; but your charming ward has made me so warmly her friend,

that I cannot be indifferent upon a ſubject of ſuch importance to her future life.

Adieu, my dear Sir;—ſend me ſpeedily an anſwer to this remonſtrance, and believe me to be, &c.

M. HOWARD.

LETTER XXVIII.

Mr. Villars to Lady Howard.

Berry Hill, May 2.

YOUR letter, Madam, has opened a ſource of anxiety to which I look forward with dread, and which to ſee cloſed, I ſcarcely dare expect. I am unwilling to oppoſe my opinion to that of your Ladyſhip, nor, indeed, can I, but by arguments which, I believe, will rather rank me as a hermit, ignorant of the world, and fit only for my cell, than as a proper guardian, in an age ſuch as this, for an accompliſhed young woman. Yet, thus called upon, it behoves me to explain, and endeavour to vindicate, the reaſons by which I have been hitherto guided.

The mother of this dear child,—who was led to deſtruction by her own imprudence, the hardneſs of heart of Madame Duval, and

and the villainy of Sir John Belmont,—was once, what her daughter is now, the beſt beloved of my heart; and her memory, ſo long as my own holds, I ſhall love, mourn, and honour! On the fatal day that her gentle ſoul left its manſion, and not many hours ere ſhe ceaſed to breathe, I ſolemnly plighted my faith, *That her child, if it lived, ſhould know no father, but myſelf, or her acknowledged huſband.*

You cannot, Madam, ſuppoſe that I found much difficulty in adhering to this promiſe, and forbearing to make any *claim* upon Sir John Belmont. Could I feel an affection the moſt paternal for this poor ſufferer, and not abominate her deſtroyer? Could I wiſh to deliver to *him*, who had ſo baſely betrayed the mother, the helpleſs and innocent offspring, who, born in ſo much ſorrow, ſeemed entitled to all the compaſſionate tenderneſs of pity?

For many years, the *name* alone of that man, accidentally ſpoken in my hearing, almoſt diveſted me of my chriſtianity, and ſcarce could I forbear to execrate him. Yet I ſought not, neither did I deſire, to deprive him of his child, had he, with any appearance of contrition, or, indeed, of humanity, endeavoured to become leſs unworthy ſuch a bleſſing;—but he is a ſtranger to all parental feelings, and has,

with a ſavage inſenſibility, forborne to enquire even into the exiſtence of this ſweet orphan, though the ſituation of his injured wife was but too well known to him.

You wiſh to be acquainted with my intentions.—I muſt acknowledge, they were ſuch as I now perceive would not be honoured with your Ladyſhip's approbation: for though I have ſometimes thought of preſenting Evelina to her father, and demanding the juſtice which is her due, yet, at other times, I have both diſdained and feared the application; diſdained, leſt it ſhould be refuſed, and feared, leſt it ſhould be accepted!

Lady Belmont, who was firmly perſuaded of her approaching diſſolution, frequently and earneſtly beſought me, that if her infant was a female, I would not abandon her to the direction of a man ſo wholly unfit to take the charge of her education; but, ſhould ſhe be importunately demanded, that I would retire with her abroad, and carefully conceal her from Sir John, till ſome apparent change in his ſentiments and conduct ſhould announce him leſs improper for ſuch a truſt. And often would ſhe ſay, "Should the poor babe have any feelings correſpondent with its mother's, it will have no want, while under your protection." Alas! ſhe had no ſooner quitted it herſelf, than

than she was plunged into a gulph of misery, that swallowed up her peace, reputation, and life.

During the childhood of Evelina I suggested a thousand plans for the security of her birth-right;—but I as oftentimes rejected them. I was in a perpetual conflict, between the desire that she should have justice done her, and the apprehension that, while I improved her fortune, I should endanger her mind. However, as her character began to be formed, and her disposition to be displayed, my perplexity abated; the road before me seemed less thorny and intricate, and I thought I could perceive the right path from the wrong: for, when I observed the artless openness, the ingenuous simplicity of her nature; when I saw that her guileless and innocent soul fancied all the world to be pure and disinterested as herself, and that her heart was open to every impression with which love, pity, or art might assail it;—then did I flatter myself, that to follow my own inclination, and to secure her welfare, was the same thing; since, to expose her to the snares and dangers inevitably encircling a house of which the master is dissipated and unprincipled, without the guidance of a mother, or any prudent and sensible female, seemed to me no less than suffering her to stumble into

ſome dreadful pit, when the ſun was in its meridian. My plan, therefore, was not merely to educate and to cherish her as my own, but to adopt her the heireſs of my ſmall fortune, and to beſtow her upon ſome worthy man, with whom ſhe might ſpend her days in tranquillity, chearfulneſs, and good-humour, untainted by vice, folly, or ambition.

So much for the time paſt. Such have been the motives by which I have been governed; and I hope they will be allowed not merely to account for, but alſo to juſtify, the conduct which has reſulted from them. It now remains to ſpeak of the time to come.

And here, indeed, I am ſenſible of difficulties which I cannot deſpair of ſurmounting according to my wiſhes. I pay the higheſt deference to your Ladyſhip's opinion, which it is extremely painful to me not to concur with; yet, I am ſo well acquainted with your goodneſs, that I preſume to hope it would not be abſolutely impoſſible for me to offer ſuch arguments as might lead you to think with me, that this young creature's chance of happineſs ſeems leſs doubtful in retirement, than it would be in the gay and diſſipated world: but why ſhould I perplex your Ladyſhip with reaſoning that can turn to ſo little account?

count? for, alas! what arguments, what perſuaſions can I make uſe of, with any proſpect of ſucceſs, to ſuch a woman as Madame Duval? Her character, and the violence of her diſpoſition, intimidate me from making the attempt; ſhe is too ignorant for inſtruction, too obſtinate for entreaty, and too weak for reaſon.

I will not, therefore, enter into a conteſt from which I have nothing to expect but altercation and impertinence. As ſoon would I diſcuſs the effect of ſound with the deaf, or the nature of colours with the blind, as aim at illuminating with conviction a mind ſo warped by prejudice, ſo much the ſlave of unruly and illiberal paſſions. Unuſed as ſhe is to controul, perſuaſion would but harden, and oppoſition incenſe her. I yield, therefore, to the neceſſity which compels my reluctant acquieſcence, and ſhall now turn all my thoughts upon conſidering of ſuch methods for the conducting this enterprize, as may be moſt conducive to the happineſs of my child, and leaſt liable to wound her ſenſibility.

The law-ſuit, therefore, I wholly and abſolutely diſapprove.

Will you, my dear Madam, forgive the freedom of an old man, if I own myſelf greatly ſurpriſed, that you could, even for a moment, liſten to a plan ſo violent,

ſo public, ſo totally repugnant to all female delicacy? I am ſatisfied your Ladyſhip has not weighed this project. There was a time, indeed, when, to aſſert the innocence of Lady Belmont, and to blazon to the world the *wrongs*, not *guilt*, by which ſhe ſuffered, I propoſed, nay attempted, a ſimilar plan: but then, all aſſiſtance and encouragement was denied. How cruel to the remembrance I bear of her woes, is this tardy reſentment of Madame Duval! She was deaf to the voice of Nature, though ſhe has hearkened to that of Ambition.

Never can I conſent to have this dear and timid girl brought forward to the notice of the world by ſuch a method; a method, which will ſubject her to all the impertinence of curioſity, the ſneers of conjecture, and the ſtings of ridicule. And for what?—the attainment of wealth, which ſhe does not want, and the gratification of vanity, which ſhe does not feel!—A child to appear againſt a father!—no, Madam, old and infirm as I am, I would even yet ſooner convey her myſelf to ſome remote part of the world, though I were ſure of dying in the expedition.

Far different had been the motives which would have ſtimulated her unhappy mother to ſuch a proceeding; all her felicity in this world was irretrievably loſt; her life was become

become a burthen to her, and her fair fame, which she had early been taught to prize above all other things, had received a mortal wound: therefore, to clear her own honour, and to secure from blemish the birth of her child, was all the good which Fortune had reserved herself the *power* of bestowing. But even this last consolation was with-held from her!

Let milder measures be adopted; and—since it must be so,—let application be made to Sir John Belmont; but as to a law-suit, I hope, upon this subject, never more to hear it mentioned.

With Madame Duval, all pleas of delicacy would be ineffectual; her scheme must be opposed by arguments better suited to her understanding. I will not, therefore, talk of its impropriety, but endeavour to prove its inutility. Have the goodness, then, to tell her, that her own intentions would be frustrated by her plan, since, should the law-suit be commenced, and even should the cause be gained, Sir John Belmont would still have it in his power, and, if irritated, no doubt in his inclination, to cut off her grand-daughter with a shilling.

She cannot do better, herself, than to remain quiet and inactive in the affair: the long and mutual animosity between her and

Sir

Sir John, will make her interference merely productive of debates and ill-will. Neither would I have Evelina appear till ſummoned. And as to myſelf, I muſt wholly decline acting, though I will, with unwearied zeal, devote all my thoughts to giving counſel: but, in truth, I have neither inclination nor ſpirits adequate to engaging perſonally with this man.

My opinion is, that he would pay more reſpect to a letter from your Ladyſhip upon this ſubject, than from any other perſon. I therefore adviſe and hope, that you will yourſelf take the trouble of writing to him, in order to open the affair. When he ſhall be inclined to ſee Evelina, I have for him a poſthumous letter, which his much-injured lady left to be preſented to him, if ever ſuch a meeting ſhould take place.

The views of the Branghtons, in ſuggeſting this ſcheme, are obviouſly intereſted; they hope, by ſecuring to Evelina the fortune of her father, to induce Madame Duval to ſettle her own upon themſelves. In this, however, they would probably be miſtaken; for little minds have ever a propenſity to beſtow their wealth upon thoſe who are already in affluence, and, therefore, the leſs her grand-child requires her aſſiſtance, the more gladly ſhe will give it.

I have

I have but one thing more to add, from which, however, I can by no means recede: my word so solemnly given to Lady Belmont, that her child should never be owned but with herself, must be inviolably adhered to.

I am, dear Madam, with great respect,

Your Ladyship's most obedient servant,

ARTHUR VILLARS.

LETTER XXIX.

Mr. Villars to Evelina.

Bury Hill, May 2.

HOW sincerely do I sympathise in the uneasiness and concern which my beloved Evelina has so much reason to feel! The cruel scheme in agitation is equally repugnant to my judgment and my inclination,—yet to oppose it, seems impracticable. To follow the dictates of my own heart, I should instantly recall you to myself, and never more consent to your being separated from me; but the manners and opinion of the world demand a different conduct. Hope, however, for the best, and

be ſatisfied you ſhall meet with no indignity; if you are not received into your own family as you ought to be, and with the diſtinction that is your due, you ſhall leave it for ever; and, once again reſtored to my protection, ſecure your own tranquillity, and make, as you have hitherto done, all the happineſs of my life!

LETTER XXX.

Evelina to the Rev. Mr. Villars.

Howard Grove, May 6.

THE die is thrown, and I attend the event in trembling! Lady Howard has written to Paris, and ſent her letter to town, to be forwarded in the ambaſſador's packet, and in leſs than a fortnight, therefore, ſhe expects an anſwer. O Sir, with what anxious impatience ſhall I wait its arrival! upon it ſeems to depend the fate of my future life. My ſolicitude is ſo great, and my ſuſpence ſo painful, that I cannot reſt a moment in peace, or turn my thoughts into any other channel.

Deeply intereſted as I now am in the event, moſt ſincerely do I regret that the plan

plan was ever propoſed: methinks it *cannot* end to my ſatisfaction; for either I muſt be torn from the arms of my *more* than father, —or I muſt have the miſery of being finally convinced, that I am cruelly rejected by him who has the natural claim to that dear title; a title, which, to write, mention, or think of, fills my whole ſoul with filial tenderneſs.

The ſubject is diſcuſſed here eternally. Captain Mirvan and Madame Duval, as uſual, quarrel whenever it is ſtarted: but I am ſo wholly engroſſed by my own reflections, that I cannot even liſten to them. My imagination changes the ſcene perpetually; one moment, I am embraced by a kind and relenting parent, who takes me to that heart from which I have hitherto been baniſhed, and ſupplicates, through me, peace and forgiveneſs from the aſhes of my mother!—at another, he regards me with deteſtation, conſiders me as the living image of an injured ſaint, and repulſes me with horror!—But I will not afflict you with the melancholy phantaſms of my brain, I will endeavour to compoſe my mind to a more tranquil ſtate, and forbear to write again, till I have, in ſome meaſure, ſucceeded.

May Heaven bleſs you, my deareſt Sir! and

and long, long may it continue you on earth, to bleſs

Your grateful

EVELINA.

LETTER XXXI.

Lady Howard to Sir John Belmont, Bart.

Howard Grove, May 5.

Sir,

YOU will, doubtleſs, be ſurpriſed at receiving a letter from one who had for ſo ſhort a period the honour of your acquaintance, and that at ſo great a diſtance of time; but the motive which has induced me to take this liberty, is of ſo delicate a nature, that were I to commence making apologies for my officiouſneſs, I fear my letter would be too long for your patience.

You have, probably, already conjectured the ſubject upon which I mean to treat. My regard for Mr. Evelyn and his amiable daughter was well known to you; nor can I ever ceaſe to be intereſted in whatever belongs to their memory or family.

I muſt own myſelf ſomewhat diſtreſſed in what

what manner to introduce the purport of my writing; yet, as I think that, in affairs of this kind, frankneſs is the firſt requiſite to a good underſtanding between the parties concerned, I will neither torment you nor myſelf with punctilious ceremonies, but proceed inſtantly and openly to the buſineſs which occaſions my giving you this trouble.

I preſume, Sir, it would be ſuperfluous to tell you, that your child reſides ſtill in Dorſetſhire, and is ſtill under the protection of the Reverend Mr. Villars, in whoſe houſe ſhe was born: for, though no enquiries concerning her have reached his ears, or mine, I can never ſuppoſe it poſſible you have forborne to make them. It only remains, therefore, to tell you, that your daughter is now grown up; that ſhe has been educated with the utmoſt care, and the utmoſt ſucceſs; and that ſhe is now a moſt deſerving, accompliſhed, and amiable young woman.

Whatever may be your view for her future deſtination in life, it ſeems time to declare it. She is greatly admired, and, I doubt not, will be very much ſought after: it is proper, therefore, that her future expectations, and your pleaſure concerning her ſhould be made known.

Believe me, Sir, ſhe merits your utmoſt attention

attention and regard. You could not ſee and know her, and remain unmoved by thoſe ſenſations of affection which belong to ſo near and tender a relationſhip. She is the lovely reſemblance of her lovely mother;—pardon, Sir, the liberty I take in mentioning that unfortunate lady, but I think it behoves me, upon this occaſion, to ſhew the eſteem I felt for her; allow me, therefore, to ſay, and be not offended at my freedom, that the memory of that excellent lady has but too long remained under the aſperſions of calumny; ſurely it is time to vindicate her fame!—and how can that be done in a manner more eligible, more grateful to her friends, or more honourable to yourſelf, than by openly receiving as your child, *the daughter of the late Lady Belmont?*

The venerable man who has had the care of her education, deſerves your warmeſt acknowledgments, for the unremitting pains he has taken, and attention he has ſhewn, in the diſcharge of his truſt. Indeed ſhe has been peculiarly fortunate in meeting with ſuch a friend and guardian: a more worthy man, or one whoſe character ſeems nearer to perfection, does not exiſt.

Permit me to aſſure you, Sir, ſhe will amply repay whatever regard and favour you may hereafter ſhew her, by the comfort and happineſs you cannot fail to find

in

in her affection and duty. To be owned *properly* by you, is the first wish of her heart; and I am sure, that to merit your approbation will be the first study of her life.

I fear that you will think this address impertinent; but I must rest upon the goodness of my intention to plead my excuse.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

M. Howard.

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